



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### **Usage guidelines**

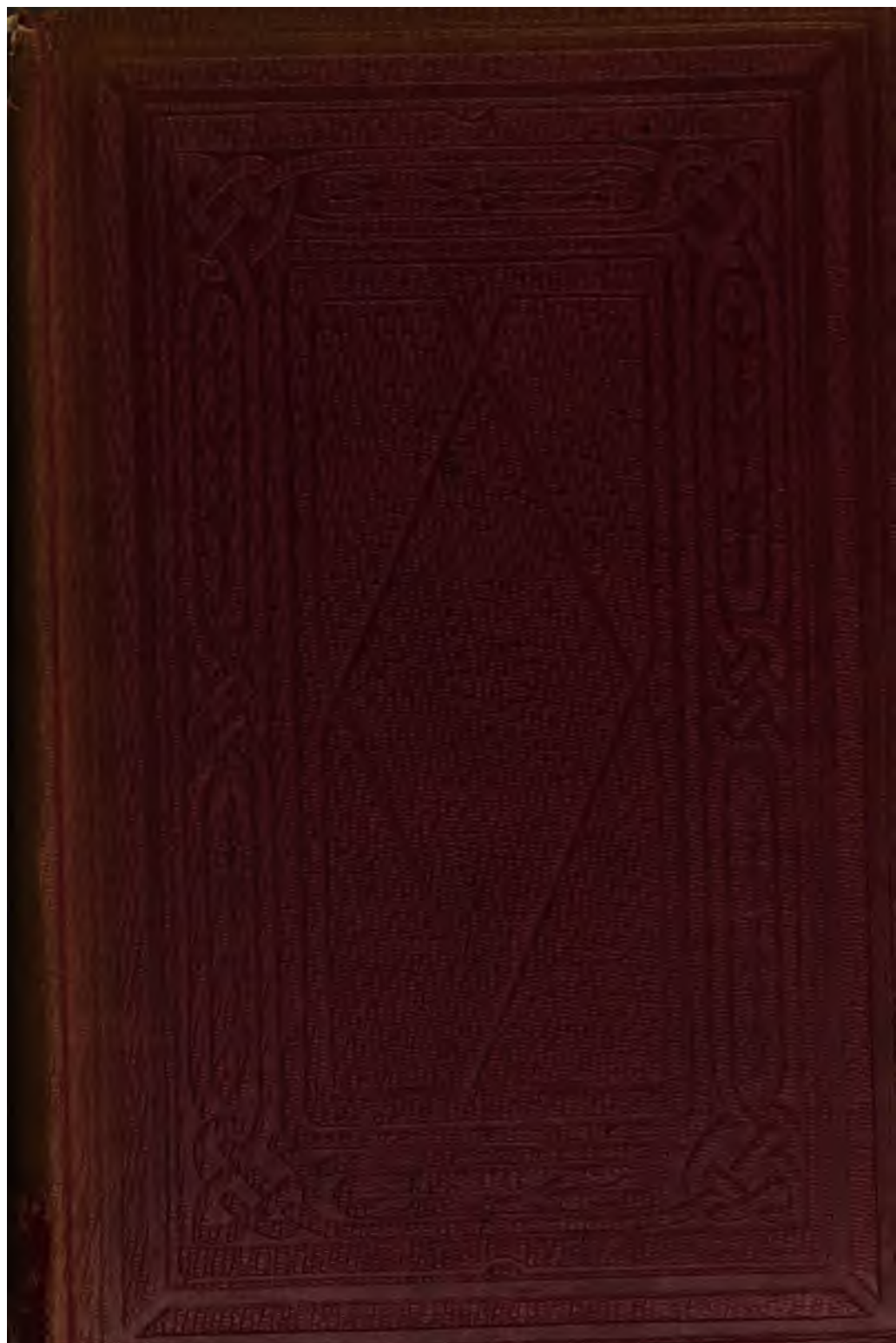
Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

### **About Google Book Search**

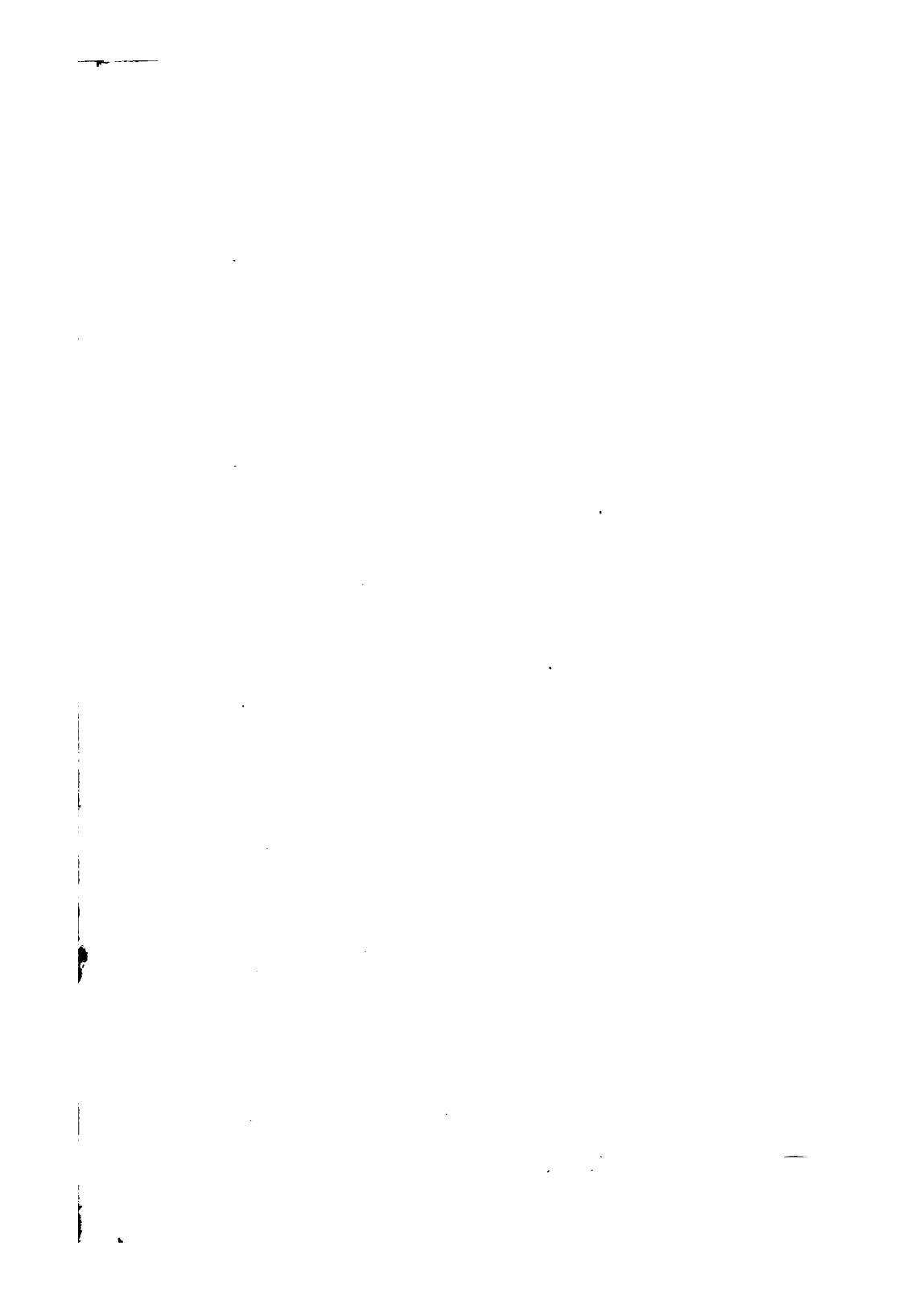
Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>





600015784V







THE LIFE  
OF  
JAMES DEACON HUME,  
SECRETARY OF THE BOARD OF TRADE.

BY  
CHARLES BADHAM, M.A.

---

"He embraced at a very early period the soundest principles of commercial policy. The history of the Board of Trade from the time of Mr. Huskisson to the close of Mr. Deacon Hume's services at that Board may be considered as the history of Mr. Deacon Hume himself, for he was the life and soul of that department: and every good measure which was adopted in rapid succession at that period, either received his earnest support, or may be traced to his wise suggestion."

SIR JAMES GRAHAM.

---

LONDON:  
SMITH, ELDER AND CO., 65, CORNHILL.  
—  
1859.

210. C. 5.



*The Right of Translation is reserved.*

“With a masculine understanding, and a stout and resolute heart, he had application undissipated and unwearied. He took public business, not as a duty which he was to fulfil, but as a pleasure he was to enjoy; and he seemed to have little delight except in what in some way related to the public service.”—BURKE ON GEORGE GRENVILLE.

“It is my deliberate opinion that Mr. Deacon Hume’s Consolidation of the Laws of the Customs, in its original form, was a masterpiece of legislative skill. Writing on a subject with which he was profoundly conversant, he succeeded in the invention of a legal style, so clear, and so popular, that every one readily seized his meaning; nor can I remember a single appeal to the Courts of Westminster to ascertain it, so long as he continued in office.”—THE RIGHT HON. SIR JAMES STEPHEN.

“The publication of his Life will vindicate his better claim to a great share in the introduction of an improved system of finance, and to commercial intercourse upon true principles, than that of many others who are too generally thought to be exclusively entitled to public gratitude for the reformation. He was the patient and efficient investigator in the preliminary inquiries to the enactment of our free trade code, and cleared the way for the success of those who followed him, in completing the great work by legislation.”—THE RIGHT HON. EDWARD ELLICE.



**ERRATA.**

Page 20, line 12, *for* "want" *read* "wants."

Page 251, line 18, *for* "proportion" *read* "proposition."

Page 302, line 14, *for* "in its doctrines" *read* "its doctrines in."

# CONTENTS.

---

	PAGE
PREFACE . . . . .	ix
CHAPTER I.	
Unacknowledged statesmen—Birth, education, and early life of James Deacon Hume . . . . .	1
CHAPTER II.	
Mr. Deacon Hume consolidates the laws of the Customs—He becomes Joint Secretary of the Board of Trade—Death of Mr. Huskisson . . . . .	21
CHAPTER III.	
Fauntleroy—Mr. Deacon Hume discovers his forgeries—Remarks of Sir Robert Peel . . . . .	35
CHAPTER IV.	
Corn Laws and Currency—Letters in the <i>Morning Chronicle</i> , in 1833, signed "H. B. T." . . . . .	53
CHAPTER V.	
Alteration in the laws relating to silk—Mr. Deacon Hume visits the principal seats of manufacture—Political opinions—	

	PAGE
Evidence before a Select Committee of the House of Commons—Mr. Huskisson—Manchester Chamber of Commerce—Mr. Deacon Hume's statements respecting smuggling canvassed in Parliament by the Earl of Derby . . . . .	129
CHAPTER VI.	
Education — The Political Economy Club — Agriculture — Currency—Politics . . . . .	157
CHAPTER VII.	
Life Insurance—The Atlas—The Customs' Benevolent Fund . . . . .	179
CHAPTER VIII.	
Duties on timber—An essay by Mr. Deacon Hume on the same subject, reprinted from the "British and Foreign Quarterly Review" . . . . .	198
CHAPTER IX.	
Mr. Deacon Hume retires from the Board of Trade—Resides at Reigate—Sir Robert Peel's request often complied with—Mr. Hume succeeded by Mr. Macgregor — The former suggests the appointment of a Select Committee on the Import Duties—Mr. Macgregor—His evidence—Mr. Deacon Hume's evidence—Remarkable passages . . . . .	238
CHAPTER X.	
The evil effects of protecting duties upon morals and civilization —The London coffee-houses . . . . .	270
CHAPTER XI.	
Notions on biography—Mr. Disraeli quoted—Sir Robert Peel's sympathy with the creations of others—His respect for Mr. Deacon Hume's opinions on finance—His influence—	

	PAGE
Difficulties—Exertions—Mr. Hume's scheme for life insurance for the working classes—His usefulness—His unostentatious career—His death—Sir Robert Peel's allusion to it in Parliament . . . . .	292

CHAPTER XII.

Parallel between Mr. Hume and Mr. Clarkson—David Hume—His Political Discourses—Forestalling and regrating—Remarks of Lord John Russell—Free Trade doctrines of English, not of French origin—Mr. Hume's long-continued exertions—His caution—Application of principles—The Anti-Corn Law League—Mr. Cobden—Sir Robert Peel's advances—The opposition he encountered—Free trade, at first, not a party question—Sir Robert Peel's statement—Mr. Gladstone quoted—Corn Laws repealed—Benefits resulting—Navigation Laws repealed—Reply to questions proposed in 1858 by the French Minister of Agriculture and Commerce—Burton's Life of David Hume quoted—Mr. Macgregor . . . . .	299
--	-----

CHAPTER XIII.

Mr. Deacon Hume's productions, oral and written—He purposed to collect and reprint them—His intellectual powers—Interesting testimonies of Sir James Stephen, of Mr. Ewart, Mr. J. B. Smith, Sir James Graham, Mr. Ellice, Mr. Cobden, and Mr. Labouchere—Mr. Hume's labours—Influence—Personal character—Habits—Concluding remarks . . . . .	380
---	-----

It was not until this volume was printed that the Author met with the following passage, referred to at the twenty-fourth page. "The task (of consolidating the Customs' laws) was of great magnitude, but we did not shrink from it. I am free to admit, that we never could have succeeded in our undertaking without the assistance of a gentleman in the service of the Customs, a gentleman of the most unwearied diligence, and who is entitled, for his persevering exertions, and the benefit he has conferred on the commercial world, to the lasting gratitude of the country. In the performance of this duty we had innumerable difficulties to encounter, and battles without end to fight. And now, sir, in one little volume which I hold in my hand, are comprised all the laws at present in existence on the subject of the management and the revenue of the Customs, of navigation, of smuggling, of warehousing, and of our colonial trade, compressed in so clear and yet so comprehensive a manner, that no man can possibly mistake the meaning or the application." . . . . .  
Mr. Hume's volume "is the perfection of codification."—HUSKISSON.

## PREFACE.

---

THE first page of this volume, if it be read with the last, will sufficiently describe its object, as well as the spirit in which it has been written. It records the life of a remarkable man, whose days were devoted to the public service, and who was, to no inconsiderable extent, a benefactor to his country.

An endeavour to afford some insight into the life and labours of those who are engaged in the important, though subordinate official service of the State, has, and it is saying much at the present day, somewhat of novelty to recommend it. We have lives of the unavoidably more conspicuous portion of public men; and not too many even of these. It is a fate to be deprecated that any of the world's benefactors should pass from the world with their histories unrecorded. And yet this is not unfrequently the case. There is no popular life of Watt, and an adequate biography of Huskisson has yet to be accomplished. As far, however, as the last mentioned is concerned, there will be a time for such a work.

This volume will necessarily indicate, incidentally,

---

the changes which have gradually taken place of late years in our commercial policy. It will, the writer hopes, not very imperfectly mark the steps which led at last to the abandonment in principle, and to a very considerable degree in practice, of the long tried experiment of commercial restriction, for the annihilation of which the subject of these pages toiled with noontide energy for a period of fifty years.

Those who presuppose that the life of a political economist must necessarily, except to a very limited number of readers, be void of interest, will, it is believed in this instance, find themselves mistaken. The succeeding pages may haply also be the means of inducing some persons to look with more complacency than they have hitherto done upon the science of political economy—a science the practical end and object of which is to show how industry may be employed to the best advantage, or how, with the least labour, and the least waste of materials, the greatest amount of comfort and enjoyment may be created for mankind.

So far from this being a subject for the few, it is eminently a subject for the many; it is one which now is, and ought to be, taught in schools, and of which no one should be permitted to remain in ignorance.\* When it is borne in mind how greatly not only

\* The Committee of Council on Education have placed some very useful elementary books on Political Economy upon their list for the use of schools which are aided by Parliamentary grant.

the commercial prosperity, but the social and individual comforts of the community are affected by a well or ill-regulated tariff—that its effects for good or for evil are felt all the world over, it must be clear that the subject is essentially a popular one, and worth any amount of pains that may be bestowed upon it. “The doctrines of political economy may admit of exceptions, but never of refutation.”\* The remarks of a well-known writer upon the subject are not much too strong where he says, “the proper business of every man, and every hour, is to know as much as he can of political economy. This is the education which must enable him to keep the benefit of his labours for himself. It has, indeed, been defined to be the science of preventing our betters from defrauding us, which is sufficient to account for its being eagerly pursued on the one hand, and vilified on the other.”

Coleridge, while he admitted that the great principles of commerce require the interchange of commodities to be free, allowed himself to speak disparagingly of political economy as a science: and the language which he employed has, unfortunately, found imitators in influential quarters. To say that “the tendency of modern political economy is to denationalize,” and that “it would dig up the charcoal foundations of the Temple of Ephesus to burn as fuel for a steam engine,”†

\* Lord John Russell.

† “Table Talk,” vol. ii., p. 327.



is, undoubtedly, excellent as a caricature, and if ridicule were the test of truth, it might be deemed conclusive. Notwithstanding the dictum of a learned lawyer, who is an authority in his profession, surely a collection of truths ascertained by experiment, and upon which well-informed men are generally agreed, must be considered as a science. It may not be a perfect science, for much probably "remains to be discovered by experience and observation." It has been confidently maintained that the study of it is the highest exercise of the human mind, and that the exact sciences require by no means so hard an effort. Let no one, however, on this account be discouraged in its pursuit. Notwithstanding the well-known lines of Pope, "a little knowledge," so far from being "dangerous," is a great deal better than none at all, upon this, as well as upon almost every other, subject.

And here the author cannot forbear expressing the obligation which he conceives the great mass of English readers lie under to Lord Brougham, for the admirable and interesting lives of David Hume and Adam Smith which he has given to the world. For inducements to read the "Political Discourses" of the first-mentioned writer, the earliest "refutation of the errors which had so long prevailed in commercial policy, and the first philosophical, as well as practical, exposition of those sound principles which ought to be the guide of states-

men in their arrangements, as well as of philosophers in their speculations, upon this important subject," he must refer to the biography itself. With respect to Dr. Smith's "Wealth of Nations," he will at once secure the thanks of the reader, if he has not already met with the "Lives," by inserting here Lord Brougham's testimony to what he justly terms its "prodigious merits."

"The 'Wealth of Nations' combines both the sound and enlightened views which had distinguished the detached pieces of the French and Italian economists, and, above all, of David Hume, with the great merit of embracing the whole subject; thus bringing the general scope of the principles into view, illustrating all the parts of the inquiry by their combined relations, and confirming their soundness in each instance by their application to the others.

"It is a lesser, but a very important merit, that the style of the writing is truly admirable. There is not a book of better English to be anywhere found. The language is simple, clear, often homely, like the illustrations, not seldom idiomatic, always perfectly adapted to the subject handled. Besides its other perfections, it is one of the most entertaining of books. There is no laying it down after you begin to read. You are drawn on from page to page by the strong current of the arguments, the manly sense of the remarks, the ful-

ness and force of the illustrations, the thickly strewed and happily selected facts. Nor can it ever escape observation, that the facts, far from being a mere bed-roll of details unconnected with principle and with each other, derive all their interest from forming parts of a whole, and reflecting the general views which they are intended to exemplify or to support."

The only notice of a biographical character which has appeared of Mr. Deacon Hume is an article communicated by his successor in office, the late Mr. J. Macgregor, M.P. for Glasgow, to the columns of a daily journal. It is a record somewhat brief and bare, but accurate in its facts, and contains some very just observations. The author has fully availed himself of the contribution, and when he could do so with advantage, *verbatim et literatim*. He has consulted all the Parliamentary papers and Reports of Select Committees he could discover, with which Mr. Deacon Hume appeared to have had any concern. From these—and some may have escaped him—as well as from the debates in Parliament, he has derived much assistance. To the late President of the Board of Trade, Lord Stanley of Alderley, his best thanks are due for permission to inspect such papers preserved in the archives of that Board as could be produced without inconvenience to the public service, as also for the use of its library. With respect to the archives, however, he

regrets to say that he found nothing which could be of service to a biographer.

It is well known, as Mr. Macgregor observed in the year 1844, that Mr. Huskisson "relied implicitly on the knowledge, acuteness, judgment, and, above all, the uncompromising honesty of Mr. Deacon Hume." Nor did he omit to add, "And to Mr. Hume I certainly owe the confirmation of those principles and that ambition to labour through all the difficulties, at my sole expense, of collecting in Europe and America the materials of my work on Commercial Statistics."

The author has thought it right to make an especial acknowledgment in the last chapter, for this volume is not a family tribute or contribution.\* The writer has only attempted what, in the case of a public man, any one is at liberty to undertake; and with the exception referred to, he is responsible for the work. Its object is to set forth the public life, with portions of the writings, of Mr. Deacon Hume, with a view of affording, in a popular form, information upon economic subjects which is greatly needed; and, also, of doing justice to the services of one "whose memory," as an able judge recently remarked, "has not yet received the place in the respect of the country which it deserves."

The greatest care, as biographers rarely fail to plead,

\* Page 331.

cannot always prevent mistakes. The author trusts that in the present instance they are few and unimportant, since he has given time and attention to the subject.

To the Right Honourable Lord Monteagle, the Right Honourable Lord John Russell, M.P., the Right Honourable Sir James Graham, Bart., M.P., the Right Honourable Sir James Stephen, K.C.B., the Right Honourable Henry Labouchere, M.P., the Right Honourable Edward Ellice, M.P., the Right Honourable W. E. Gladstone, M.P., Sir Denis Le Marchant, Bart., William Ewart, Esq., M.P., J. B. Smith, Esq., M.P., Richard Cobden, Esq., A. G. Stapleton, Esq., Thomas Doubleday, Esq., F. J. Hamel, Esq., and G. Plank, Esq., he is also indebted, and desires to express his thanks for very obliging communications, which either contained information, or afforded hints that were useful to him in his progress through the work.

*Sudbury, Suffolk, December, 1858.*

# LIFE OF J. DEACON HUME.

---

---

## CHAPTER I.

### UNACKNOWLEDGED STATESMEN—BIRTH, EDUCATION, AND EARLY LIFE OF JAMES DEACON HUME.

It has been justly observed, that few persons have any idea what obligations this country lies under to those who may be termed her unacknowledged statesmen. They sit in their separate apartments in Downing Street, and Whitehall, the unseen sources of many a splendid reputation. They, not unfrequently, both suggest and prepare the particular measures, which are submitted to Parliament every session, by the Government, and it is to them that we are generally indebted for those judicious and timely provisions, which relieve the nation from some pressing distress, and lend éclat to the favourite of the hour. As the judges of the land are largely assisted in the cases or causes which come before them by the speeches of counsel, who have been giving their attention to every point at issue, so are Cabinets influenced, and Select Committees of the

House of Commons instructed and guided, by the advice and information which under-secretaries, especially if they should happen to be men of unusual sagacity and intelligence, are capable of affording. They also from time to time supply the Secretaries of State and the Chancellors of the Exchequer, with those telling facts which enable them, in debate, to silence opposition, and extricate Government from embarrassing positions. It may, nevertheless, be doubted whether even the most valuable of the individuals referred to ever had justice done to them, or received their full reward. Their acquired powers of official suggestion are admitted; but strictly, they possess no real administrative power. They must not seek a seat in Parliament, or mix themselves up with the conflicts of party. Were they to do so, it would be impossible for them to continue in office, as many have done, from year to year, unaffected by the succession of Governments. If at every change of administration those who hold office in Downing Street were one and all to depart, the question, "How is the Queen's Government to be carried on?" would not only be asked, but it would also have to be answered.

It may be thought that the foregoing remarks are applicable only to persons who, though occupying a respectable position, never expect to fill the responsible office of secretary. But it is not so. With the exception of the former being less known to the public, the observations are applicable to both.

James Deacon Hume was descended from an ancient

Border family, the Humes, or Homes, as it was occasionally written, of Marchmont, whose arms he consequently bore.\* The practice of spelling Hume, the great English historian of that name remarks, "is by far the most ancient and most general till about the Restoration, when it became common to spell Home contrary to the pronunciation. The name is frequently mentioned in Rymer's "Fœdera," and always spelt Hume."†

Had the subject of these pages been of the elder branch of his family, he would have had an immediate claim to the dormant peerage above mentioned: a circumstance which he never regarded, for, having no son, but a large family of daughters, and a fortune inadequate to the rank of an Earl, he would undoubtedly have been deterred from preferring that claim. Nor does the elder branch appear to have been more solicitous about it. There is, with very many, at the present day, a disregard, real or affected, of ancient lineage, for which it is not difficult to account. We are disposed, however, to coincide in the remark of the historian above-mentioned, where he says:—"I am not of the opinion of some, that these are matters altogether to be slighted. I doubt that our morals have not much

\* Vert, a lion rampant ar. Crest, a lion's head erased ar. Motto: *True to the end.* "A Selection from the Papers of the Earls of Marchmont, in the possession of Sir George Henry Rose, Bart., illustrative of Events from the year 1685 to 1750," in three volumes, published by Murray, in 1831, is a work of considerable historical interest.

† See a letter (date 1758) in Burton's "Life of David Hume."



improved since we began to think riches the sole things worth regarding.”\*

James Deacon, the son of James and Elizabeth Hume, was born on the 28th of April, 1774, in the parish of Newington in the County of Surrey. He had four sisters. The youngest, who survives, married the late Rev. Edward Smedley, M.A., Author of “Sketches from Venetian History,”† a “History of the Reformed Religion in France,”‡ and a “History of France from the Final Partition of Charlemagne to the Peace of Cambray,”§ with many other well-known publications. Before he had reached the period of middle age he became incapacitated by bodily affliction for the active duties of his profession, and devoted himself to literature in its highest and worthiest pursuits. His second daughter published some years since a volume of poems entitled “Songs and Ballads from English History.” Not the least interesting is “Grizzel Hume,” a poem founded upon the following passage taken from the Second Series of Sir Walter Scott’s Tales of a Grandfather.|| The subject was very naturally one of personal and family interest.

\* David Hume came from another branch, the Humes, or Homes, of Ninewells, and so was descended from Earl Home. The arms of Home of Ninewells are curious. Vert, a lion rampant argent, within a bordure or, charged with *nine wells*, or springs, barry, wavy, and argent.

† Murray’s Family Library.

‡ The Theological Library. Rivington.

§ The Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge.

|| The account is more fully given in “A Narrative of the Events which occurred in the Enterprise of the Earl of Argyle, in 1685,” by Sir Patrick Hume.

“Sir Patrick Hume, of Polwarth, afterwards Lord Marchmont, was one of the leaders of the Jerviswood plot in the reign of Charles II. When this conspiracy was discovered, Sir Patrick, having narrowly escaped falling into the hands of those who were sent to arrest him, concealed himself in a vault in the churchyard of Polwarth, and remained there till his enemies had given up seeking for him in that neighbourhood. During his sojourn in this dark and melancholy lurking place, his daughter Grizzel, a girl about eighteen years old, conveyed provisions to him every night. She was obliged to go forth alone, at midnight, for this purpose; and great must have been her anxiety during each of these perilous expeditions; for had chance discovered her to any evil-disposed person, the secret of her father's hiding place must inevitably have become known, and there can be no doubt that he would have shared the fate of the noble Baillie of Jerviswood, who, having refused to purchase safety by becoming a witness against Lord Russell, suffered death about this time.”

James Hume, after the birth of James Deacon, the subject of this volume, was appointed Commissioner of the Customs. But at the time to which we refer, he was the deputy of a noble duke, who had a patent place in that department. He obtained the appointment through the favour and influence of his uncle, Dr. Hume, Bishop of Salisbury. The duke's place was one of considerable value, arising from fees. The salary of the deputy did not exceed 300*l.* a year. Mr. Deacon Hume was greatly attached to his father, who

was a man of very amiable character, as well as of considerable ability. The Rev. Edward Smedley was accustomed to speak of him as "without exception, the best man and the most delightful companion he had ever familiarly known."

When the Secretaryship of the Customs, worth at that time above 2,000*l.* a year, became vacant, Mr. Pitt, the Minister of the day, selected Mr. James Hume to fill the office: a circumstance which surprised and gratified him, for he had no patron, and it was entirely unsolicited on his part. This deserves to be mentioned, as it is a sort of parallel to the manner in which his son was afterwards advanced; and a parallel to which Mr. Deacon Hume himself very often referred. He was fond of relating the following anecdote in connection with his father's appointment. "When Mr. Pitt gave him the place, he went to communicate the intelligence to the Duke of —. The latter, however, instead of expressing pleasure that one who had served him ably and faithfully for many years should have met with such good fortune, only regarded the matter as it affected himself; and he exhibited much dissatisfaction that his own interest had not been considered in the arrangement. While Mr. James Hume held the office first mentioned, his income being limited, he removed to Bideford, a retired village in Devonshire. It was in this neighbourhood that his son's career, in the seventh year of his age, was very near being cut short. Having to cross the long bridge over the river Torridge on his way to school, and finding one

day other boys loitering and amusing each other with the various feats which they could perform, he, being determined to outdo them all, climbed to the top of the parapet, and then letting himself down on the outside, hung by his hands over the water. Those who are acquainted with the height of the bridge, and the nature of the stream, will appreciate the danger of the situation. It was one from which a boy could not, by any possibility, extricate himself. When his little hands were almost tired out, he was rescued, strange to say, by a stout washerwoman, who not only saved his life, but gave him at the same time a sound beating, in order to teach him not to risk it again in such perilous adventures.

At an early age he was sent to Westminster School, where the boys of his family, both before and after his time, have generally been educated, and have arrived, in several instances, at some distinction.\* He was there during the successive head-masterships of Drs. Smith and Vincent; and of the latter he always spoke in that tone of admiration with which he was regarded by all his pupils.

Some old Westminsters will probably be gratified, as well as the general reader, by the following portrait of the Venerable Doctor, by the hand of Mr. Deacon Hume's brother-in-law, the late Rev. Edward Smedley:—

\* His nephews, the Rev. Charles Dodgson, the present Archdeacon of Richmond, and Hassard Hume Dodgson, Esq., both from this school, were elected students of Christchurch, Oxford. The first-mentioned was a double first-class man in 1821, the latter a first-class man in 1825, and Dean Ireland's scholar in 1826.

“ How vividly and how faithfully can I summon to my mind’s eye that loved and venerated sage, to whom I owe my first awakening to the value of letters ; and consequently, all the happiness and consolation which during life have flowed from their culture !

*ἔχω γὰρ ἄ, χὼ διὰ σε, κοίτε ἄλλον βροτῶν.*

I see him, even now, gently rebuking a fault, with benevolence, which the assumption of magisterial terrors could not enable him wholly to conceal ; or else eagerly catching at an opportunity to enlarge upon some merit, so that his praises might vivify a hitherto torpid emulation, and draw forth qualities which, without their aid, might never have germinated. I see him, as he used to pace to and fro, swinging himself upon the boards which creaked beneath the pressure of his ample-buckled shoes, while he rolled out a full-mouthed volume of Atticism, or transposed into kindred English, by his own copious diction and majesty of enunciation, the seemingly untranslatable magnificence of some ecstatic chorus ; or yet, again, when kindling with a deeper and more solemn energy, and in still loftier tone, he brought to our knowledge, and to our affections, the things which pertain unto salvation ; threw fresh light even upon the luminous evidences which it was his favourite province to expound ; fostered the lambs committed to him, not as a hireling ; and dropped within our hearts that good seed which, after many days, has since ripened with numbers into the fulness of harvest. But,

*Abiit senex ! periit senex amabilis !*

These are his own words in tribute to a predecessor. Would that he could once more buckle on his mail, and stand up against the Philistine who assaults our camp."

Mr. Deacon Hume was slow to admit that he had profited much by his studies at school. Possibly, he omitted to take into account that part of the education of a public school which is often overlooked—namely, the education which boys, in this country, give themselves; and this, as the late Sir Edward Alderson,\* no mean authority either on education or on law, was accustomed, and very justly, to insist, is a very important part of education. It is certain that Mr. Hume was a bold, active, hardy boy, and, as he constantly affirmed, an idle one. Sydney Smith used to relate, with mischievous complacency, a youthful encounter which he himself once had with his "amiable schoolfellow," the late Archbishop of Canterbury,† complaining that the future primate knocked him down with a backgammon-board, for no greater offence than his having beaten him in the game. Mr. Deacon Hume used to tell, in a similar manner, of his having fought and beaten the late Sir Watkins Williams Wynne, who, though the bigger boy of the two, was not so good a gladiator as his antagonist. When he first went to Westminster he was a home-boarder; for the last few years, however, he boarded at the house of one of the dames; and before he left school he was the head boy of the house. In that situation he strongly

\* Baron of the Exchequer.

† Dr. Howley.

displayed one of the leading qualities of his mind, which always induced him to protect the weak against the strong, and to exert himself vigorously to check all sorts of bullying and tyranny.

The present Marquis of Lansdowne, and the late Sir Francis Burdett, of whom he appears to have had nothing remarkable to record, were among his contemporaries at school. Although he did not keep up the connections which he formed at Westminster, it was not from any want of interest in them, but from the pressing nature of his occupations in after life. A short time before his death, he was much gratified by a visit from an old schoolfellow, whom he recognised the moment he entered the room, though they had not met from the time when they parted at Westminster, upwards of forty years before. His pleasantest holidays used to be spent at Bremhill, in Wiltshire, of which place, his uncle, the Rev. Nathaniel Hume, one of the canons of Salisbury, was vicar, and the bishop, his near relative, was patron.

In the year 1791, at the age of sixteen, James Deacon Hume was removed from Westminster to the long room of the Custom House. At that time hard drinking was a prevailing vice; and boys upon leaving school expected to participate in what they looked upon as one of the privileges of manhood. J. D. Hume upon his first entrance into life was no better than his generation. He was, however, speedily disgusted with the practice; and having discovered how degrading and destructive a habit it was, he made a resolution, and

he kept it throughout the days of his youth, never to touch wine. Those who can remember the usages of that period, will appreciate the firmness and strength of mind which this resolution evinced.

At the time of which we are speaking, he was a young man of great bodily activity, fond of field sports, a bold rider, and of a high spirit. It was only by a violent effort that he withdrew himself from hunting. Energy was his leading characteristic through life, and happily he transferred the quality to those more useful duties with which his name became afterwards so honourably associated. Upon one occasion, in the depth of winter, being disappointed of the horse which was to take him to the place where the hounds met, he rose between three and four o'clock in the morning, and walked in his top-boots a distance of twenty-three miles into Hertfordshire; and in the evening, after a day's hunting, he offered for a trifling wager to walk back again to London. As an instance of his personal courage, it may be mentioned that several highway robberies having been committed upon the Croydon Road, he and another young man took a post-chaise, and went in the night to Croydon, merely with the hope of an adventure. But though disappointed of his chance in this instance he met with it in another; a short time after, when he was going to Leatherhead in the night, he was stopped and robbed by three highwaymen. He behaved with the greatest coolness, and only begged them to take care of their pistols, with which he said they were quite as likely to hurt each other, as him.



Seeing that he offered no resistance, they did as he requested, put aside their arms and searched him at leisure. In doing this, however, they tickled him so extremely, that it was with the greatest difficulty he could refrain from striking them. It was well that he forbore: for one of them, on the same night, with the muzzle of his pistol, knocked out the eye of a traveller, who made a show of resistance.

Whether the somewhat daring adventurer discovered in the days of his youth any predilection for political economy, or for matters nearly allied to it, we are not informed. But looking before and after, it is difficult to suppose that in this case, as Wordsworth says, "the boy" was not "father to the man." The fact that his father's talents in the same direction attracted the notice of Mr. Pitt, who knew more of political economy, perhaps, than any statesman of his time,\*—who as a financial Minister, was the first to introduce into our commercial system, those principles of freedom which have, of late years, been considerably developed; this fact, together with the future eminence of the subject of these pages, leaves little room for doubt upon the point. At any rate it is certain that he embraced, at a very

\* The author of a recent and very spirited "History of England to the Peace of Paris, 1856," Mr. C. D. Young, justly observes, "The extent to which Mr. Pitt was in advance of his age may be further seen, if we recollect that he was the first proposer of the great measures of Parliamentary Reform, and of Roman Catholic Emancipation, which have only been carried within the recollection of the present generation." No man, it has been correctly said, has suffered more from being confounded with those who came after him than this great Minister.

early period, the soundest views of commercial policy, that he was an admirer of the political discourses of David Hume, who might not very incorrectly, be called his great ancestor, and of Dr. Adam Smith—that he obtained, while he was still young, speedy promotion in the Custom House, and that he was soon raised to an office of responsibility in a department, of which in a few years, as afterwards of the Board of Trade, he became the life and soul—the faithful, intelligent, intrepid, public servant.

There was a maxim which he often repeated, namely, that if a man wishes to be advanced upon the ground of merit, he must not content himself with merely doing his duty: he must be ready at all times to do more than his duty: to assist every one who needs his assistance, and to extend as far as possible the field of his usefulness. This he considered to be a solid groundwork for official worth and reputation, which was sure to be obtained by attention and persevering industry in the public service. His feelings with respect to the result of patient labour in every walk of life appear to have been precisely what has been so forcibly experienced by an old writer:\* “Few men know their own strength for want of trying it, and upon that account think themselves really unable to do many things which experience would convince them they have more ability to effect than they have will to attempt. It is idleness that creates impossibilities; and where men care not to do a thing, they shelter them-

\* South,

selves under a persuasion that it cannot be done. The shortest and the surest way to prove a work possible is strenuously to set about it: and no wonder if that proves it possible, which for the most part makes it so." In this spirit he acted: and it is difficult to believe that he did not feel confident that it would, eventually, make him something more than a valuable officer in the department in which he was engaged.

He had now arrived at what often proves, though probably it was not so in this instance, the turning point of a man's life. He married, June 4, 1798, Frances Elizabeth, daughter of Edward Whitehouse, Esq., of Walworth, who had an appointment in the Custom House, and was gentleman usher at the Court of St. James's;\* she was the widow of Charles Ashwell, Esq., of the Island of Grenada. Mrs. Hume was a lady of great beauty and dignity of demeanour, which her somewhat unusual height in no way tended to diminish. She was sometimes compared to Mrs. Siddons, whom in feature, however, and in some respects even in person she did not resemble. Her natural disposition was

\* The following anecdote may possibly be thought not too trifling to be related. After the attempt made by Margaret Nicholson to assassinate George III. by stabbing him with a knife, addresses were presented to the King, in congratulation upon his providential escape. All who presented these addresses were knighted, and were ever after jocosely spoken of as the "Knights of the *Blade*." Mrs. Hume, who was then a child, had heard a great deal about these formidable personages. One day, therefore, upon her father's taking her to St. James's, to see the company at a drawing-room, she became very importunate; and Mr. Whitehouse much amused the Marquis of Hertford, by remarking, "My little girl is so exceedingly anxious that I should show her some of the Knights of the *Blade*."

especially indicated by an entire absence of selfishness, and a remarkable consideration for others, especially the young, to whom she felt much delight in giving pleasure. At the time of her second marriage she was not more than twenty-five years of age, and had two daughters; Frances, who married George Pocock, Esq., of Lincoln's Inn Fields, and Mary, the wife of William Willimott, Esq., of Eltham, in the county of Kent. It is related of the first Lady Ellenborough\* that so great was her beauty, that if she only appeared to water her flowers in the balcony of her house in Bloomsbury Square, a crowd would immediately assemble. Mrs. Hume, who always seemed to be insensible of her own charms, could not appear in any public assembly without being the observed of all observers.

When, after the fall of Napoleon Bonaparte, Louis XVIII. was returning to France, he and the Duchess of Angoulême passed a night at Great Stanmore, and were met there on the following morning by the Prince Regent, who was to convey them to London in the state carriage. Before their departure the gentry of the neighbourhood were admitted to a view of the royal party after the following manner:—The illustrious visitors being seated in the assembly-room, from the open door, each lady and gentleman wearing a white favour, or cockade, was permitted to have a momentary view of them. When Mrs. Hume took her turn, the Prince expressed his admiration in strong terms, adding

\* Lord Campbell's "Lives of the Chief Justices."

to some one who was standing near him, "I think you *must* bring *her* in." Whereupon Sir Benjamin, afterwards Lord Bloomfield, approached, and asked Mrs. Hume whether she would like to have a nearer view of the Duchess? Upon her assenting, Sir Benjamin offered her his arm, and conducted her into the room: a mark of distinction which was bestowed upon no other person. She was at a loss to account for the attention which she had received: and was accustomed to say she supposed she was indebted for the compliment to her milliner, who had sent her a larger favour than those which were worn by the rest of the company, and that so she was made to appear the most loyal of them. Many years elapsed before the matter was explained. The late Lord Bloomfield having afterwards become acquainted with several members of her family, the circumstance was brought to his recollection; and Mrs. Hume was informed, and at last we believe convinced, that it was to the Prince Regent she was indebted for the distinction.

A few years after his marriage, Mr. Hume removed from London to Pinner, near Harrow, where he farmed upon a large scale. He was devotedly fond of agriculture in all its branches, and often referred to his practical experience as a farmer, in illustration of his powerful reasonings in favour of free trade. But he never suffered his agricultural pursuits to interfere with his public duties. For several years he was accustomed to ride up and down from London to Pinner, through all the changes of the weather, leaving his house in the

depth of winter long before dawn, and returning after dark. Unfortunately, he was at the height of his farming speculations just before the close of the Peninsular War. At a great expense he had brought his land into a high state of cultivation; and then the peace suddenly followed with its low prices, whereby he was a heavy sufferer; so much so, that in the year 1822, he thought it prudent to relinquish his farming occupation, and to break up a large establishment. He took a house for three years, at St. Omer, to which he removed his family, though official duties obliged him to reside almost entirely in London. He crossed the channel, however, as often as he could, and upon one occasion twice before he succeeded in reaching the opposite shore. On the 23rd of December, 1824, Mr. and Mrs. Hume, and one of their children, having left Dover for Calais, purposing to spend Christmas with the family at St. Omer, they encountered a rough sea-passage, the vessel losing one of its paddle-wheels. Darkness came on, and upon arriving at Calais, instead of entering the harbour, the steamer struck against the pier and went out again to sea. For many hours they were fully aware of their perilous condition. The storm continued, the disabled steamer was beyond the captain's control, and they were in great danger of being drifted upon the Goodwin Sands. Famine was added to their other miseries, no provision having of course been made for what ought to have been only a two hours' passage. About 8 o'clock the next morning they found themselves off Ramsgate, and were only too thankful to be safe in

any harbour, even though, with respect to their destination, they were further off than when they set out. This was not at all according to Mr. Hume's notions of progress; but there was no help for it. It so happened that there was a French lady on board who had some time previously become insane, in consequence of the sudden death of her husband and two children; and she was constantly and piteously exclaiming that she could see them. This poor lady took a great fancy to Mrs. Hume, whose influence over her was immediate and complete; very much to the comfort and satisfaction of her attendant, who was continually soliciting Mrs. Hume's interference, whenever she had occasion to control or to pacify her.

It was a little before this time that Mr. Hume first became known to the public beyond the walls of the Custom-house. His situation often imposed upon him the duty of writing reports upon subjects connected therewith for the use of the Commissioners. One of these papers had been forwarded to Mr. Huskisson, and related to a subject upon which he happened to be seeking information. Struck, probably informed, by the document, he begged to see the individual who had written it; and he, of course, had not long conversed with Mr. Hume before he perceived his worth, how much he had reflected upon, and how thoroughly versed he was in every branch of political economy.

We may here mention that not long after Mr. Deacon Hume became Controller of the Customs, he succeeded in having a case relating to the duties of that office

carried before the Court of Queen's Bench, contrary to the opinions both of the Attorney-General and the Solicitor-General of the day; and Lord Ellenborough adopted his view of the question, notwithstanding the opinion of the law officers of the Crown. Lord Ellenborough was the Judge, who, as Lord Campbell observes in his "Lives,"\* "gained great credit with all sensible men from his conflict with Lord Kenyon about forestalling and regrating. He had studied successfully the principles of political economy, and he admirably exposed the absurd doctrine that the magistrate can beneficially interfere in the commerce of provisions; but he had the mortification to see his clients sentenced to fine and imprisonment for the imaginary crime of buying with a view to raise the price of the commodity."† In those days, as the same biographer elsewhere remarks, "the cry was as strong for protection against forestallers, as it has more recently been for protection against foreign importation; and so general was the agitation, that corn-merchants were in great danger of being torn to pieces by judge-led mobs. I am ashamed to say that most of the puisne judges participated in the hallucination of Lord Kenyon; insomuch that Sydney Smith thus wrote in his old age—

"The absurdity of attributing the high price of corn to the combination of farmers and the dealings of middle-men, was the common nonsense talked in those days of my youth. I remember when ten judges out

\* Vol. iii. 138.

† R. v. Waddington, 1 East. 166.



any harbour, even though, with respect to their destination, they were further off than when they set out. This was not at all according to Mr. Hume's notions of progress; but there was no help for it. It so happened that there was a French lady on board who had some time previously become insane, in consequence of the sudden death of her husband and two children; and she was constantly and piteously exclaiming that she could see them. This poor lady took a great fancy to Mrs. Hume, whose influence over her was immediate and complete; very much to the comfort and satisfaction of her attendant, who was continually soliciting Mrs. Hume's interference, whenever she had occasion to control or to pacify her.

It was a little before this time that Mr. Hume first became known to the public beyond the walls of the Custom-house. His situation often imposed upon him the duty of writing reports upon subjects connected therewith for the use of the Commissioners. One of these papers had been forwarded to Mr. Huskisson, and related to a subject upon which he happened to be seeking information. Struck, probably informed, by the document, he begged to see the individual who had written it; and he, of course, had not long conversed with Mr. Hume before he perceived his worth, how much he had reflected upon, and how thoroughly versed he was in every branch of political economy.

We may here mention that not long after Mr. Deacon Hume became Controller of the Customs, he succeeded in having a case relating to the duties of that office

carried before the Court of Queen's Bench, contrary to the opinions both of the Attorney-General and the Solicitor-General of the day; and Lord Ellenborough adopted his view of the question, notwithstanding the opinion of the law officers of the Crown. Lord Ellenborough was the Judge, who, as Lord Campbell observes in his "Lives,"\* "gained great credit with all sensible men from his conflict with Lord Kenyon about forestalling and regrating. He had studied successfully the principles of political economy, and he admirably exposed the absurd doctrine that the magistrate can beneficially interfere in the commerce of provisions; but he had the mortification to see his clients sentenced to fine and imprisonment for the imaginary crime of buying with a view to raise the price of the commodity."† In those days, as the same biographer elsewhere remarks, "the cry was as strong for protection against forestallers, as it has more recently been for protection against foreign importation; and so general was the agitation, that corn-merchants were in great danger of being torn to pieces by judge-led mobs. I am ashamed to say that most of the puisne judges participated in the hallucination of Lord Kenyon; insomuch that Sydney Smith thus wrote in his old age—

"The absurdity of attributing the high price of corn to the combination of farmers and the dealings of middle-men, was the common nonsense talked in those days of my youth. I remember when ten judges out

\* Vol. iii. 138.

† R. v. Waddington, 1 East. 166.

any harbour, even though, with respect to their destination, they were further off than when they set out. This was not at all according to Mr. Hume's notions of progress; but there was no help for it. It so happened that there was a French lady on board who had some time previously become insane, in consequence of the sudden death of her husband and two children; and she was constantly and piteously exclaiming that she could see them. This poor lady took a great fancy to Mrs. Hume, whose influence over her was immediate and complete; very much to the comfort and satisfaction of her attendant, who was continually soliciting Mrs. Hume's interference, whenever she had occasion to control or to pacify her.

It was a little before this time that Mr. Hume first became known to the public beyond the walls of the Custom-house. His situation often imposed upon him the duty of writing reports upon subjects connected therewith for the use of the Commissioners. One of these papers had been forwarded to Mr. Huskisson, and related to a subject upon which he happened to be seeking information. Struck, probably informed, by the document, he begged to see the individual who had written it; and he, of course, had not long conversed with Mr. Hume before he perceived his worth, how much he had reflected upon, and how thoroughly versed he was in every branch of political economy.

We may here mention that not long after Mr. Deacon Hume became Controller of the Customs, he succeeded in having a case relating to the duties of that office

carried before the Court of Queen's Bench, contrary to the opinions both of the Attorney-General and the Solicitor-General of the day; and Lord Ellenborough adopted his view of the question, notwithstanding the opinion of the law officers of the Crown. Lord Ellenborough was the Judge, who, as Lord Campbell observes in his "Lives,"\* "gained great credit with all sensible men from his conflict with Lord Kenyon about forestalling and regrating. He had studied successfully the principles of political economy, and he admirably exposed the absurd doctrine that the magistrate can beneficially interfere in the commerce of provisions; but he had the mortification to see his clients sentenced to fine and imprisonment for the imaginary crime of buying with a view to raise the price of the commodity."† In those days, as the same biographer elsewhere remarks, "the cry was as strong for protection against forestallers, as it has more recently been for protection against foreign importation; and so general was the agitation, that corn-merchants were in great danger of being torn to pieces by judge-led mobs. I am ashamed to say that most of the puisne judges participated in the hallucination of Lord Kenyon; insomuch that Sydney Smith thus wrote in his old age—

"The absurdity of attributing the high price of corn to the combination of farmers and the dealings of middle-men, was the common nonsense talked in those days of my youth. I remember when ten judges out

\* Vol. iii. 138.

† R. v. Waddington, 1 East. 166.

any harbour, even though, with respect to their destination, they were further off than when they set out. This was not at all according to Mr. Hume's notions of progress; but there was no help for it. It so happened that there was a French lady on board who had some time previously become insane, in consequence of the sudden death of her husband and two children; and she was constantly and piteously exclaiming that she could see them. This poor lady took a great fancy to Mrs. Hume, whose influence over her was immediate and complete; very much to the comfort and satisfaction of her attendant, who was continually soliciting Mrs. Hume's interference, whenever she had occasion to control or to pacify her.

It was a little before this time that Mr. Hume first became known to the public beyond the walls of the Custom-house. His situation often imposed upon him the duty of writing reports upon subjects connected therewith for the use of the Commissioners. One of these papers had been forwarded to Mr. Huskisson, and related to a subject upon which he happened to be seeking information. Struck, probably informed, by the document, he begged to see the individual who had written it; and he, of course, had not long conversed with Mr. Hume before he perceived his worth, how much he had reflected upon, and how thoroughly versed he was in every branch of political economy.

We may here mention that not long after Mr. Deacon Hume became Controller of the Customs, he succeeded in having a case relating to the duties of that office

carried before the Court of Queen's Bench, contrary to the opinions both of the Attorney-General and the Solicitor-General of the day; and Lord Ellenborough adopted his view of the question, notwithstanding the opinion of the law officers of the Crown. Lord Ellenborough was the Judge, who, as Lord Campbell observes in his "Lives,"\* "gained great credit with all sensible men from his conflict with Lord Kenyon about forestalling and regrating. He had studied successfully the principles of political economy, and he admirably exposed the absurd doctrine that the magistrate can beneficially interfere in the commerce of provisions; but he had the mortification to see his clients sentenced to fine and imprisonment for the imaginary crime of buying with a view to raise the price of the commodity."† In those days, as the same biographer elsewhere remarks, "the cry was as strong for protection against forestallers, as it has more recently been for protection against foreign importation; and so general was the agitation, that corn-merchants were in great danger of being torn to pieces by judge-led mobs. I am ashamed to say that most of the puisne judges participated in the hallucination of Lord Kenyon; insomuch that Sydney Smith thus wrote in his old age—

"The absurdity of attributing the high price of corn to the combination of farmers and the dealings of middle-men, was the common nonsense talked in those days of my youth. I remember when ten judges out

\* Vol. iii. 138.

† R. v. Waddington, 1 East. 166.

of the twelve laid down this doctrine in their charges to the various grand juries on their circuits.’”

And yet those were times when such words of wisdom as the following had recently been uttered by Burke:—“The balance between consumption and production makes price. Market is the meeting and conference of the *consumer* and *producer*, when they mutually discover each other’s wants. Nobody has observed with any reflection what market is, without being astonished at the truth, the correctness, the celerity, the general equity, with which the balance of want is settled. They who wish the destruction of that balance, and would fain by arbitrary regulation decree, that defective production should not be compensated by increased price, directly lay their axe to the root of production itself.”

## CHAPTER II.

MR. HUME CONSOLIDATES THE LAWS OF THE CUSTOMS—HE BECOMES  
JOINT-SECRETARY OF THE BOARD OF TRADE—DEATH OF MR.  
HUSKISSON.

“This chaos of legislation (the laws of the Customs) was compressed by Mr. Hume into ten acts—a sort of Code Napoleon.”—  
STAPLETON’S *Life of Canning*.

THERE are few subjects which, for many years, have attracted greater attention than proposals for the consolidation of the Statute Law. We are about to record a memorable instance of success in a particular branch of it.

In the autumn of 1822, Mr. Deacon Hume first entertained the vast idea of consolidating the Laws of the Customs. Grave heads had often been shaken, when the possibility of such a result was seriously spoken of. Such demonstrations, however, produced no effect upon the mind of Mr. Hume. At the close of the year, with the sanction of the Lords of the Treasury, he addressed himself to the work. Having, as we have already mentioned, located his family at St. Omer, he established himself in chambers in Parliament Street, Westminster, a locality convenient for his purpose. Here, his duties at the Custom House being necessarily suspended, for the space of nearly three



years, night and day, he toiled at his almost super-human undertaking.

Some notion may be formed of the Herculean nature of the undertaking, when it is stated that the Customs laws had accumulated from the reign of Edward I. to the enormous amount of fifteen hundred statutes. These statutes, often confused, often contradictory, sometimes unintelligible, formed, previous to the year 1825, the intricate and labyrinthine chaos of our Custom House Legislation. It required long and patient study to ascertain where the provisions were to be found which regulated the merchant and the trader in the management of his affairs. They were puzzled and harassed beyond measure. Into this confused and disordered mass, Mr. Hume introduced clearness, harmony, and regularity. He collated the scattered enactments, and arranged the matter under ten heads; the regulations respecting each of which formed a separate Act. Within as small a number as ten intelligible statutes, he contrived to preserve all that was requisite. As Mr. Hamel, the present Solicitor to the Customs, has observed, "it was justly deemed a great triumph of industry and skill." If, however, the reader would ascertain for himself the extent and merit of what was achieved, he must examine and contrast the Babel library of the Custom House laws and regulations about thirty-five years ago, with the single volume that contains Mr. Deacon Hume's codification; which, to quote the words of one who privately printed some memorials of Mr. Huskisson

soon after his decease, "is so clear and comprehensive that neither the meaning nor the application of those laws can any longer be mistaken."

Mr. Hume, however, did not survey his completed labours with entire complacency. He thought that the great object had not been completely obtained; he contended that the simplification might have been carried further—that the reform had only commenced—and in his valuable evidence before the Import Duties Committee in 1840, he publicly communicated his views in detail, strengthened by longer reflection, and more matured experience.\*

The laws of the Customs, as prepared by Mr. Deacon Hume, the subjects of which were the law of navigation, the registering of vessels, the warehousing of goods, the granting of bounties, the prevention of smuggling,† and some provisions relating to the Isle of Man, were introduced into Parliament in high terms of commendation by Mr. Herries, at that time one of the secretaries of the Treasury. They received the Royal assent in the month of July, 1825. Mr. Huskisson, probably from his deeming it a hopeless undertaking, did not appear at the outset to be very solicitous as to the result. No one, however, more sincerely felt and acknowledged its value, as soon as it was accomplished. Mr. Hume, immediately after the passing of the Acts, proceeded to prepare an edition

\* A further codification was effected in 1845, by Mr. Walford, founded on Mr. Hume's consolidation; and another by Mr. Hamel in 1853.

† This subject was entirely confided to Mr. Thackeray, and although included in the volume, formed no part of Mr. Hume's labours.

of them, with notes and indices. A member of the House of Commons to whom this country is greatly indebted,\* informed the writer of this narrative that he well remembers Mr. Huskisson holding up a copy of it, and observing in terms of exultation, that a single octavo volume contained the entire laws of the Customs. Both in and out of Parliament he constantly referred with the greatest satisfaction to the compilation and enactment of this new fiscal code. And the friend of Mr. Huskisson, already referred to, correctly remarks, "A task of such magnitude and extraordinary labour Mr. Huskisson frequently declared could never have been achieved but by the unwearied diligence of Mr. Deacon Hume, to whom the lasting gratitude of the country is owing for his persevering exertions, and for the essential benefit which he thus conferred upon the commercial world." As has been already intimated, not only were the laws of the Customs consolidated, but some considerable changes were effected at the same time in the laws themselves, "in conformity with the spirit of those principles of commercial intercourse on which the Government had determined to act, while duties of importance were considerably reduced, those on numerous minor articles were lowered. During the war the rates of the tariff had been so increased, for the single purpose of revenue, that they had become for the most part inapplicable to a state of peace, and required general revision. This revision was regulated by the follow-

\* Lord John Russell.

ing principles:—First, those duties were reduced, the heaviness of which tended to lessen rather than to increase their total product. Secondly, the duties on raw materials, and on various articles useful in manufactures, were lowered to little more than nominal sums. Thirdly, protecting duties of extravagant amount were reduced to that point, at which the consumer was fairly entitled to relief, either by the increased industry of the home manufacturer, or by access to the sources of supply. And, lastly, the comforts and tastes of the public, and the advantage of their retail suppliers, were consulted by the removal of duties which prevented the introduction, or most unnecessarily abridged the use, of many articles without benefit to any parties whatever.”

“By the system founded on these principles, there has not only been distributed amongst a numerous population a great increase of employment, but its diffusion has been greater, in proportion, than its increase. It is also very remarkable that those trades which have been prominent in complaining of foreign competition have neither suffered more in diminution of profits, nor increased less in extent of business than those which have been able to hold foreign competition at defiance.”

“Besides this consolidation of the Customs laws, an Act was passed in the same year, whereby many commercial advantages were conferred on the colonies beyond those contained in Mr. Robinson’s two Acts of 1822; Mr. Huskisson laying down as the fundamental principle on which his alterations were founded—a

principle deduced from past experience with respect both to *Ireland and our Colonies*—that ‘so far as the colonies themselves were concerned, their prosperity was cramped and impeded by a system of exclusion and monopoly; and that whatever tended to increase the prosperity of the colonies could not fail, in the long run, to advance, in an equal degree, the general interest of the parent state.’ By these Acts, not only articles of first necessity, but goods of all descriptions, with very few exceptions, were allowed to be imported from all countries, either in British ships, or in the ships of the country of their production; and the goods of the colonies were allowed to be exported in any ships to any foreign country whatever. The only part of the colonial system which was persevered in was that which excluded foreign ships from carrying goods from one British place to another.”

“The admission of foreign ships, however, was not unconditional: it was made to depend upon reciprocal or equivalent liberality towards our trade and navigation on the part of the countries profiting by the advantages of it; but a power was given to the King in Council to relax the rigour of the law, if occasion should, in any particular cases, seem to require it. The privileges of warehousing were extended to the chief trading ports of the colonies; a measure which was well adapted to promote the creation of entrepôts in those places, for the general barter trade of that quarter of the globe.”\*

\* Stapleton’s “Political Life of Canning,” vol. iii. 1831.

There are few persons who would not have shrunk from so arduous an undertaking as that in which Mr. Hume embarked; few, having commenced it, would have had courage to persevere: but he was not at all accustomed to say 'there is a lion in the path;' zeal impelled him; energy and unwearied exertion enabled him to vanquish every difficulty. The work entirely occupied him for a lengthened period, during which he contracted the habit of working late at night, or rather through the night until the morning: for he seldom went to bed until four or five, a practice which probably tended imperceptibly to injure his health, and to shorten his days. Conscious, however, that he was endowed with a constitution beyond that of most men, he never spared himself. This mighty work, to which the merchants of England owe the most solid benefits, has never been estimated by the general public to the extent which its merits deserve. But it is not difficult to perceive that this lack of fame is mainly owing to its extraordinary excellence. Had the consolidation been effected by any but a master-hand, the confusion which must have inevitably ensued would have caused the country to ring with the complaints of its merchants from one end of it to the other. But the ease with which the great change was effected, and the facilities that it afforded in the conduct of all mercantile transactions were *felt* indeed with silent gratitude and admiration by those who benefited by the alteration, but it did not attract that general applause which would assuredly have been the portion of a more

splendid, but less solid performance. Excepting the far less extended labours of the late Sir Robert Peel in the consolidation of the criminal law, whereof the result was, that a large number of statutes in whole or in part were compressed into five, an achievement which will probably always go by his name, there is no parallel, so far as we know, to the labours of Mr. Deacon Hume; who, withal, had little or no assistance; whereas Sir R. Peel always expressed his obligations to Mr. Hobhouse, who had been Under Secretary of State for the Home Department, and to Mr. Gregson, whose aid, as he never omitted to state, had been most material.

The Government, during the year in which the Customs' Acts received the Royal assent, voted 6,000*l.* to Mr. Hume as a public acknowledgment of the service he had rendered to the country. He was most unfortunate, however, in his investment of this money, for he never recovered it.

The changes themselves were proposed and carried through both Houses of Parliament without difficulty. "It was not," as Mr. Stapleton justly remarked, "till after the occurrence of the commercial crisis that they met with the animadversion of the members of Parliament. That crisis, as was unavoidable, produced almost universal embarrassment, and as it so happened that the change in our commercial system had not long preceded the embarrassment; there were not wanting individuals to connect the two together, and to describe the one as the cause, and the other as the effect. It may, however, be safely asserted that they entirely

failed in establishing this connection; and the convulsion in our commercial transactions in December, 1825, which has been known by the name of 'the panic' must be ascribed to other causes than that of the liberal policy of the Administration; which, far from producing, or even increasing the disaster, has been proved, as clearly as argument can prove it, to have tended not a little to its alleviation."\*

Though for three years subsequent to this period, Mr. Hume's only office was at the Custom House, he was frequently sent for to advise, or to afford information, at the Board of Trade, not only by Mr. Huskisson, but by other eminent men who successively presided over that department. So necessary, indeed, did his services become, that for some time before he left the Custom House, a room was provided for him at the Board of Trade; till, under the Presidency of Mr., afterwards Lord, Fitzgerald, no vacancy occurring in the Secretaryship, for which he was designed, in the year 1828, the office of Joint-Secretary was created. Upon his accepting this appointment, he resigned the office of Controller of the Customs, the duties of which he had uninterruptedly discharged for a period of thirty-eight years.

Mr. Deacon Hume's removal from the Custom House to the Board of Trade, it will be supposed, was much approved by Mr. Huskisson, who probably suggested it; and it was fully appreciated by Mr. Hume. It was

\* "Life of Canning," vol. iii.



an advantage to both: and the efficiency of the public service was manifestly augmented. It would be an interesting inquiry, did we possess all the information which would be requisite for conducting it, to ascertain how far Mr. Hume influenced, or led Mr. Huskisson, whose mind, in many respects of a similar character, was wanting in the boldness and intrepidity which were the leading characteristics of the mind of Mr. Hume. That many of Mr. Huskisson's measures, when he was President, owed their origin or their efficacy in no small degree to the suggestions of Mr. Hume has been stated on the highest authority; indeed, it is apparent from papers and reports which have been printed, from time to time, by order of Parliament.

Devoted to the public service, Mr. Hume thought much less of his individual reputation than of the good which he might be able to accomplish. While he was at the Board of Trade, he would sit up night after night writing papers upon a variety of subjects for the use of the President or other individuals. Upon one occasion, when Mr. Huskisson was carrying through the House of Commons a bill relating to the silk trade, an amendment was suggested which rendered alterations throughout the whole of the bill necessary, and Mr. Huskisson expressed a desire to have them the next morning, without calculating, at the moment, the amount of labour which they would impose. The bill, too, was to be printed in its altered form. When Mr. Huskisson addressed himself to the subject upon the following day nearly the whole of it was ready; but finding

some portion incomplete, he expressed his disappointment. Mr. Hume's excuse, if a good reason may be so described, was, that he had undertaken the alteration of the bill as soon as he received it—that in order to expedite the matter, he had been sitting through the night at his table, with the printer's assistant at his side, and that, in fact, he had been engaged upon it ever since without having retired to rest. Mr. Huskisson, of course, felt the force of the reason, and expressed himself perfectly satisfied.

How often are the apparently best concerted arrangements brought to nothing! The advantage which the country might fairly be expected to reap from the united labours of Mr. Huskisson and Mr. Hume at the same Board, was unexpectedly dissipated by a rupture between the former and the Duke of Wellington, which led to Mr. Huskisson's exclusion from office; and all hope of his return was cut off by his untimely death. Mr. Hume was present upon that sad occasion. He had travelled to Liverpool with a large party,\* including several members of the Government, in order to witness the opening of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway, on the 15th of September, 1830, and he shared the grief which they all experienced when they saw the engine crush him—the engine which afterwards carried his wounded body to Eccles at the rate of thirty-six miles an hour—a speed, which, a few moments before

\* The Duke of Wellington was one. It was on this day that he travelled for the first time upon a railway. As soon as the train was fairly in motion, he made the soldierly and characteristic remark—“This would be very effective for the conveyance of troops.”

had been pronounced impossible.\* Mysterious decree of Providence that England should be deprived of Huskisson, not the most brilliant, but probably one of the wisest, certainly one of the most progressive, statesmen of his time, upon that day, which was to be the introduction of a social and commercial revolution, second only to that brought about by the discovery of printing, whereby "the course of modern history was altered, and the pulses of public life began to flow."

The regret which Mr. Deacon Hume, and those who thought with him, felt for the loss of Mr. Huskisson, apart from personal connection, was very great—the representative of the political economists had passed away—the parliamentary expositor of the principles of commercial freedom, as far as those principles had been developed, was no more—and his death created a void which was not to be presently supplied by any living statesman. Like him, whose life it is the object of this volume to portray, he had a natural talent for finance; and it had been cultivated with the most unwearied application. "His information and research had penetrated into every corner of our financial and commercial system." The knowledge of all other members of Par-

\* The engine was the "Rocket," the rough type of its myriad successors. "An Olympic engine-race came off at Rainhill, when the 'Rocket' won, attaining during its trial trip a *maximum* velocity of twenty-nine miles an hour, or about three times the speed that one of the judges declared to be the limit of possibility. The shares of the company rose ten per cent., for they were relieved from the proposed expense for fixed engines and engine-houses; and a social revolution was predicted by discerning spirits. The 'Rocket' was the morning star of the new era."

liament upon questions of finance, as Lord Brougham once went so far as to say, was as dust in the balance when compared with his resources. His acquaintance with the variously conflicting interests of the greatest commercial empire in the world was perhaps unequalled. His life had been mainly devoted to the study of one particular subject; and he had justly earned the character, which was not generally accorded to him until many years after his decease, of being the safest, as well as the most intelligent, of the financial statesmen of his day.

If he was proud of anything, it was of being sought out to represent the town of Liverpool in Parliament. The growing prosperity of that town, he observed with great satisfaction. "A prosperity," he would often remark, "which was not to be ascribed to extensive charters, or to privileged companies, but to the industry, the enterprise, and the good sense of individuals; there being no town in the kingdom which contributes so much in proportion to the revenue of the State, or a town which requires so little of that revenue to be expended upon it." When he considered, too, that with a population of 150,000 persons Liverpool was, and we believe is still, with a population of more than double that amount, "without a barrack, a guard-house, or a single company of soldiers, a mind like his could not but silently inquire, whence arose this beautiful order? or fail to discover the solution of the question in the activity which seeks and receives general employment, while in the lesson which this

inculcates, he doubtless saw a fresh proof of the necessity of giving expansion and growth to the industrial powers of the country.

Dreadful catastrophe which changed a day of public rejoicing into one of national mourning for his loss! Saddening consideration, that "out of half a million of people assembled on such an occasion of festivity Death should have stricken a foremost man of the world, and left the rest unscathed! That of all that multitude whom the morning of the 15th of September, 1830, had poured forth to swell the triumph, at night, *he* only should be missing!"

## CHAPTER III.

FAUNTLEROY—MR. DEACON HUME DISCOVERS HIS FORGERIES—  
REMARKS OF SIR ROBERT PEEL.

“We are easily shocked by crimes which appear at once in their full magnitude; but the gradual growth of our wickedness, endeared by interest, and palliated by all the artifices of self-deceit, gives us time to form distinctions in our own favour; and reason, by degrees, submits to absurdity, as the eye is in time accommodated to darkness.”—DR. JOHNSON.

IN the autumn of the year 1824, the country was startled by the discovery of a series of most extraordinary forgeries; amounting altogether to no less a sum than 353,000*l*.

The discovery originated with Mr. Deacon Hume. Having had occasion to go to the Bank of England, respecting the transfer of the property of a family of eight orphan children, for whom with Mr. Fauntleroy and Mr. Goodchild, he was a trustee, he found that his name had been forged to a letter of attorney, for the sale of 10,000*l*., three per cent. annuities, and that the stock had long since been sold out. Alarmed at the discovery, he addressed himself to Mr. Goodchild, and as he more than suspected, so he found, *his* signature also had been forged.

The circumstances of the case, which need not be

more particularly noted, left no room for doubt as to the criminal. They proceeded the same evening to the police-office in Marlborough Street, and obtained from Mr. Conant, the magistrate, a warrant against Mr. Fauntleroy, of the firm of Marsh, Stracey, Fauntleroy, and Graham, in Berners Street. Mr. Conant was astonished and distressed at the application, for he was personally acquainted with Mr. Fauntleroy; but upon the information of Mr. Hume and Mr. Goodchild, he granted a warrant for his apprehension. That evening, Mr. Fauntleroy was from home. The officers watched the house, but to no purpose, during the night. The next morning, about ten o'clock, his usual hour of business, he was seen to enter the bank. Mr. Goodchild, in the absence of Mr. Hume, preceded the officer in entering the bank, and was engaged in conversation with Mr. Fauntleroy, in a small room, when the officer entered, made known his name and business, and at the same time produced his warrant. Mr. Fauntleroy became dreadfully agitated and exclaimed,—“Gracious Heaven! cannot this business be settled?” The officer begged of him to make no noise, but to walk out quietly for a few minutes, and they would talk about a settlement. Mr. Fauntleroy then signed a few blank cheques, with an unsteady hand, and having given them to one of his clerks, told him he was going out for a moment, and putting on his hat, he walked on without observation by the side of the officer, who immediately conducted him to the private house of Mr. Conant. Mr. Fauntleroy now became

fully aware of the dreadful situation in which he stood. He expressed a desire that the principal clerk in the banking-house might be sent for, in order that he might give some directions about the business of the day. When, however, the clerk arrived, he merely requested to see Mr. Graham, and Mr. Stracey, two of the partners in the firm.

Mr. Deacon Hume was then sworn and examined to prove one act of forgery for 10,000*l.*, on the part of the accused; and at the termination of the investigation, which lasted several hours, the prisoner was committed to the House of Correction in Coldbath Fields, by virtue of the following warrant:

“Police-office, Marlborough Street, Sept. 10, 1824.

“Receive into your custody the body of Henry Fauntleroy, charged on the oath of James Deacon Hume, and others, before me, John Edmund Conant, Esquire, one of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace, acting in, and for the County of Middlesex, with having feloniously forged and uttered as true, a certain instrument, with intent to defraud the Governor and Company of the Bank of England, and others, of the sum of 10,000*l.*, and him safely keep in your custody for re-examination before me.

“J. E. CONANT.”

“To the Governor of the House of Correction,  
Coldbath Fields, or his Deputy.”

The next morning Mr. Fauntleroy was brought to Marlborough Street, for further examination. The depositions of the Rev. Mr. Hardinge, and Sir Richard



Hardinge, relative to their signatures to a warrant of attorney, for 3,500*l.*, having been received, and all the witnesses bound over to prosecute, he was conveyed back to the House of Correction.

Upon how slight a circumstance do matters of the greatest moment often turn! Had the time not arrived when the property of which Mr. Hume was a trustee must be transferred, he would probably not have had occasion to go to the Bank of England. The dividends receivable at the banking-house in Berners Street would have been paid as usual; and though the stock had long since been sold out, all would have appeared secure. It seems singular that Mr. Fauntleroy did not duly estimate so obvious a contingency, but it would appear either that he did not, or that he was obliged to disregard it.

Little did Mr. Hume imagine on the morning of the 10th of September, that instead of going out of town in the afternoon, as he had intended, to join Mrs. Hume at Ramsgate, he would be detained by having to go to a police-office to prefer a charge of forgery against a co-trustee, a member of a well-known, and what was presumed to be a most respectable banking establishment. He did not reach Ramsgate until the following evening. He looked jaded and worn, but he only remarked that he had been detained in town unexpectedly by urgent business. He joined the family at dinner, but in a few minutes he said he did not feel well, and would withdraw and lie down upon the sofa in the adjoining room. Mrs. Hume, perceiving that there was something amiss, followed him, when he made known to her the cause of

his indisposition and the painful duty which had been cast upon him.

Mr. Hume returned to town the following Monday, but it was not until Friday, the 1st of October, that Mr. Fauntleroy was again brought up. On that day Mr. Forbes, solicitor, and Mr. Harmer's chief clerk attended on behalf of the prisoner. Mr. Freshfield appeared on behalf of the Bank. After receiving the depositions of Mr. Graham, Mr. Goodchild, and others, relative to the powers-of-attorney for 46,000*l.* Three per Cents., 17,500 Navy Five per Cents., 5,300*l.* Three per Cent. Consolidated Fund, and also those of the Misses Young (sisters of Mrs. Fauntleroy), and others; as to warrants-of-attorney to dispose of 5,000*l.* Three per Cent. Consols, and to another 5,000*l.* Three per Cent. Consols, Mr. Freshfield said that he did not for the present mean to go any further on the part of the prosecution, and the prisoner was remanded for a week.

While Mr. Fauntleroy was in Coldbath Fields Prison, an article appeared in the *Times*, complaining that he was not sufficiently secured; that he had a splendid room which overlooked the hills of Hampstead and Highgate, and that he was possessed of considerable sums of money, which assertions were contradicted.

On the 20th of October, he was again brought to Marlborough Street for a final hearing. He appeared to have undergone a great change in health and spirits during the short time that had elapsed since his last examination; his countenance presented a somewhat ghastly hue, and altogether there were signs of his

having suffered intense mental anguish. During the examination he seemed to be absorbed in thought, and almost unconscious of what was going on.

Colonel Thomas Lyster, of Wexford, deposed relative to a power-of-attorney for 6,644*l.* 13*s.* 3*d.* Four per Cent. Annuities, which he placed in the banking-house of Marsh, Stracey, and Co., to receive the dividends, but on the failure of that house he came to London, and then ascertained that that money had been sold out. James Tyson and others proved the transfer, which was in the handwriting of the prisoner.

Mr. Freshfield next proceeded to the warrant-of-attorney for 500*l.* Long Annuities, which had been transferred by the prisoner without the consent of a Mr. Griffiths. Several clerks proved the forgeries of the various signatures.

This being the whole of the evidence intended to be produced on the part of the prosecution, the witnesses were bound over to prosecute at the next sessions at the Old Bailey, and the prisoner was remanded to Newgate.

Almost immediately after his apprehension, he expressed to his friends his firm conviction that no defence would avail him, and his anxious desire, by pleading guilty, to spare himself the pain of being exposed for hours to the gaze of a crowded court, and compelled to hear the narrative of his delinquencies. He stated that it would be more congenial to his feelings to adopt this course, because the prosecutors' counsel would then be compelled to fold up their briefs, and all further publicity would be avoided. In compliance, however,

with the wishes of his friends, he placed himself in the hands of legal advisers. His counsel were unanimously of opinion that he had no prospect of escape, if the indictments were framed, as they had reason to expect, from the intelligence and caution of the Bench agents, that they would be. They consequently declined to advise Mr. Fauntleroy as to the course which he should pursue, leaving him to be guided entirely by his own feelings as to whether he would take his trial or plead guilty. Nothing decisive was elicited from him until the Wednesday preceding the trial, when he addressed a letter to his solicitor, expressing his determination to plead not guilty.

He was annoyed at seeing the injurious statements which were daily propagated respecting him in the public prints. He was also distressed at finding his name frequently associated with that of the murderer Thurtell. These attacks unsettled his resolves, and induced him to put himself upon his trial, if it were only to have the opportunity of answering the statements which had been circulated to his disadvantage.

On the morning of the trial, October 30, Messrs. Forbes, Mayhew, and Harmer waited upon the accused, whom they found at breakfast. He appeared to be composed, and produced a fair copy of his defence, into which he had introduced some judicious alterations and remarks. He read it over to them in a voice which was almost cheerful, observing as he went on, that he felt relieved by the hope of removing some part of the opprobrium which had been unfeelingly and unpar-

ingly cast upon his character. Having dressed himself in a suit of mourning, with a mien serious, but no way dejected, he calmly awaited the summons of the Court.

The presiding Judges were Mr. Justice Parke and Mr. Baron Garrow.

The clerk of arraigns having read from the indictments the several counts against the prisoner, who pleaded "Not Guilty," a jury was duly empanelled and sworn. The substance of the first indictment was, that the prisoner had, on the 1st of June, 1815, forged a certain deed, purporting to be under the hand and seal of Frances Young, in the purpose of selling 5,000*l.* Three Per Cent. Stock, with intent to defraud the Bank of England, and that he had uttered the same deed with the like intent.

Mr. Law, as junior counsel for the prosecution, opened the pleadings. The Attorney-General upon rising was greatly affected, and with difficulty suppressed his emotion. In a criminal charge of this kind, involving the life of the prisoner, his counsel were precluded, as the law was at that time, from addressing the jury on his behalf. The Attorney-General, as he promised, confined himself strictly to the facts of the case. The prisoner was to be tried on a single case in the first indictment, without reference to any other. He had been a partner in the banking-house of Marsh, Stracey, and Co., a house which had been established for thirty years, and in which the prisoner's father had been a partner. During the lifetime of his father he

had been a confidential clerk in another banking firm, and had so acquired a complete practical knowledge of banking. In the year 1807 the prisoner's father died: and he succeeded him in the firm of Marsh and Co., in which from his perfect knowledge of business he became the active manager. In the year 1815, a lady, named Frances Young, was a customer to the bank. This lady resided at Chichester, and had at that time a sum of 5,450*l.* standing in her name in the Three Per Cent. Consols. The prisoner was empowered to receive dividends for Miss Young, but not to sell out the stock. In the month of June, however, a power to sell was applied for. The mode of proceeding in such cases is, that an application be made to the Bank, stating the name of the applicant, the name of the person holding the stock, and the object of the power of Attorney. It was usual to preserve the slips of paper upon which those applications were set forth; but in the present instance, the slips had been mislaid or destroyed, so that it could not be precisely ascertained by whom the application had been made. The power to sell purported to be executed by Miss Young; and the signature of Frances Young to it was a forgery. It also purported to have the names of two persons as witnesses, who never signed their names to it, and who never saw Miss Young execute it. The instrument was filled up in words at full length, and they were all in the handwriting of the prisoner. The names of the witnesses, who were clerks in the house of Marsh and Co., were also written by the prisoner. The in-

strument thus purporting to have been fully executed was lodged at the Bank. It was necessary that it should remain there for the space of twenty-four hours, in order to afford the Bank clerks an opportunity of being assured that it was a genuine instrument. When a transfer of stock is to be made, the person who applies for the power must attend to claim his right to act, and sign his name. On the 31st of May, 1815, the power in question was lodged at the Bank, and on the 1st of June the prisoner came to the Bank, where he signed his name to enable him to act upon that power. This, however, was only a part of the case. There was another document which disposed of the whole matter. The prisoner was apprehended in his counting-house. Upon that occasion he locked his desk with a key which was attached to his watch. The key was taken from him. The solicitor of the Bank afterwards went to the counting-house to search for more papers. He there found, in the prisoner's private desk, a key that opened a tin case, which, unlike the rest, had no name upon it. In this case there were many papers: and amongst others, a document, in which were the names of several persons holding stock of the Bank, which had been sold by the prisoner. Among them were Frances Young, 5,000*l.*; Pelham, 20,000*l.*; with many others, amounting to 170,000*l.* All these memoranda were in the handwriting of the prisoner. There was also a memorandum to this effect. "In order to keep up the credit of the banking-house, I forged the powers of attorney for selling out, and have sold out without

the knowledge of my partners, and paid the dividends upon the above sums to the parties. Signed Henry Fauntleroy, Berners Street, May 7, 1816." There was also another memorandum in the following words: "The Bank first began to treat us ill by refusing our acceptances, and thereby injuring our credit; and they shall smart for it." From that time until the discovery took place by Mr. Deacon Hume, the prisoner continued his fraudulent transactions, and to pay the dividends upon the different stocks which he sold, but he omitted to post them in his day-book.\* A more extraordinary proceeding altogether had never been brought to light.

The facts having been proved by the testimony of many witnesses, and Mr. Fauntleroy having been asked if he wished to say anything in his defence, he at once proceeded to read, in an audible and feeling manner, a statement which had been for the most part prepared by himself.

The following paragraphs contain his account of the affairs of the bank:—

"My father established the banking-house in 1792, in conjunction with Mr. Marsh, and other gentlemen. Some of the partners retired in 1794, about which time a loss of 20,000*l.* was sustained. Here commenced the

\* The regular payment of the dividends on the enormous sums of stock which he sold out involved an annual draught upon him of about 16,000*l.* Added to this, it is ascertained that upon some sudden occasions, during the war, and after, when called upon to produce stock to which he was trustee, he was often compelled to purchase at an enormous loss, in order to prevent the disclosures which at last took place.



difficulties of the house. In 1796, Mr. Stracey and another gentleman came into the firm, with little or no augmentation of capital.

“In 1800 I became a clerk in the house, and continued such six years; and although during that time I received no salary, the firm were so well satisfied with my attention to the interest and welfare of the establishment, that I was handsomely rewarded by them. In 1807 my father died; I succeeded him. I was then only twenty-two years of age, and the entire weight of an expensive but needy banking establishment at once devolved upon me. I found it deeply involved in advances to builders and others which had rendered the system of discounting necessary, and which we were obliged to continue in consequence of the scarcity of money at that time, and the necessity of making further advances to those persons to secure the sums in which they stood indebted.

“In this perplexed state the house continued until 1810, when its embarrassments were greatly increased, owing to the bankruptcies of Brickwood and others, which brought upon it a sudden demand for no less than 170,000*l.*, the greater part being for the amount of bills which our house had accepted and discounted for these parties since become bankrupts.

“About 1814, 1815, and 1816, from the speculations with builders, brickmakers, &c., in which the house was engaged, it was called upon to provide funds to near 100,000*l.*, to avert the losses which would otherwise have visited it from those speculations.

“In 1819, the most responsible of our partners died, and we were called upon to pay over the amount of his capital, although the substantial resources of the house were wholly inadequate to meet so large a payment.

“During these numerous and trying difficulties the house was nearly without resources, and the whole burden of management falling upon me, I was driven to a state of distraction, in which I could meet with no relief from my partners; and, almost broken-hearted, I sought resources where I could, and so long as they were provided, and the credit of the house supported, no inquiries were made, either as to the manner in which they were procured, or as to the resources from whence they were derived.

“In the midst of these calamities, not unknown to Mr. Stracey, he quitted England, and continued in France upon his own private business, for two years, leaving me to struggle as well as I could with difficulties almost insurmountable.

“Having thus exposed all the necessities of the house, I declare that all moneys temporarily raised by me, were applied, not in one instance for my own separate purposes or expenses, but in every case they were immediately placed to the credit of the house in Berners Street, and applied to the payment of the pressing demands upon it. This fact does not rest upon my assertion, as the transactions referred to are entered in the books now in the possession of assignees, and to which I have had no access since my appre-

hension. These books, I understand, are now in court, and will confirm the truth of my statement; and to whatever account all the sums may be entered, whether to that of stock, of Exchequer bills, or to my private account, the whole went to the general funds of the banking-house."

An experienced London banker was heard to observe at the time, that there was not in the metropolis a man whom he should prefer to Mr. Fauntleroy for a perfect knowledge of banking. He was minutely acquainted with every description of public securities both foreign and domestic, and could tell their respective and relative values in an instant.

Several witnesses were called at his trial to speak in favour of Mr. Fauntleroy's character. Sir Charles Forbes was of the number. There were some persons who had known him for a quarter of a century. All spoke highly of him. Mr. Justice Parke told the jury that they might dismiss from their minds the charge of forgery, because there was no proof of that crime having been committed in the city of London, within the sole jurisdiction of the jury. That, however, he added, would not alter the prisoner's case, since uttering was as criminal, which had been proved to have occurred within its jurisdiction. A verdict of guilty of uttering was returned. Sentence of death was afterwards passed upon him, and carried into effect.

The enormity of the offence, in this instance, appeared in no way to check the growing repugnance of the public mind to the infliction of death in cases of for-

gery. There have been few instances, from all accounts, in which more compassion prevailed for the offender, few in which capital punishment excited more painful feelings. The abolition of the forfeiture of life in cases of forgery, robbery, and even arson, may be well, but we cannot altogether agree with Sir Samuel Romilly, that our laws at this period might be said to be written in blood; neither can we apply to ourselves the words of Montaigne, whom he quotes, "Il n'est si homme de bien qu'il mette a l'examen des loix toutes ses actions et pensées, qui ne soit pendable dix fois en sa vie."\*

Sir Robert Peel, in a speech which he delivered, May 24, 1830, in opposition to the amendment of Sir James Mackintosh in favour of the abolition of the penalty of death in cases of forgery, furnishes a very striking and practical dissertation upon the crime of forgery in connection with this lamentable history:—

\* "I believe there can be little doubt that the extreme rigour of the law adopted in 1728 on the subject of forgery, was owing to the alarms created by the extensive and somewhat extraordinary forgeries of an individual, a full account of whose depredations will be found in the state trials for the period. It appears that this person, whose name was Hale, committed a number of forgeries on a member of this House, named Gibson. He forged one bill for 1,600*l.*, another for 400*l.*, and another for 700*l.*, and one for 6,500*l.* At that time it was the practice of a member in franking a letter to write his name with the word 'Free' in the corner, leaving the superscription to be filled up in the writing of the person sending the letter. Hale, it appears, procured a number of these franks, and having changed the words, 'Free, R. Gibson,' into 'For R. Gibson,' he then filled up the blank as a bill, and was thus able to commit the forgery with ease. I have little doubt that the indignation and alarm produced by this forgery were the principal causes of the enactment of these severe laws."—  
SIR ROBERT PEEL.

“ With respect to the crime itself there are many reasons—such as the magnitude of the gain which may be acquired, the facility of committing the crime, the difficulty of detection, and the temptation to commit it, which mark it with peculiar characteristics, and make it deserving of especial consideration. As an illustration of the magnitude of the sums to be obtained, I will refer to the case of Fauntleroy. The Bank of England was answerable for forgeries committed by this individual through a series of years, and actually paid a sum of 353,000*l*. Looking at the temptation, I would observe, it comes across a man overwhelmed with distress, who, by the mere presenting a draft at a banker’s, may be relieved from his difficulties, and find himself suddenly in the midst of prosperity; and then, if he does not succeed, there is the difficulty of detection. In this crime there are none of those revolting circumstances which alarm mankind. There is no confederacy necessary. The criminal need not disclose his guilt to any *particeps criminis*; there is, consequently, an extreme difficulty of detection; the draft is paid by a banker’s clerk, who may, perhaps, be induced, in case of need, to cancel it or to deliver it up. Then the signature may be so well imitated that no precaution can detect the forgery at the moment. No vigilance, therefore, can guard against it: and when it is once committed there may be no remedy. No receiver, too, is necessary, as in the case of many other crimes; and the property, when once obtained, cannot be made evidence against the criminal.

But even the crime itself may be committed by an innocent man, and a man ignorant that he is committing a crime. A man presents a draft at a banker's: it is paid in the hurry of business, over a crowded desk; the person who presents it may not be the forger, but some one whom he has employed. The real culprit may escape, if the stake is large enough, to the continent: he may leave the country; but even if he do not do so, the difficulty of detection is very great. It depends, obviously, upon a question of personal identity. The clerk who pays the draft must, in the first instance, recognize the man who presented it; and if he is only some ignorant and innocent agent, he must find out and identify his employer. Thus it is a question of double identity; and that must be decided before the guilt can be brought home to any person. When I recollect, therefore, the magnitude of the gain—the great temptation—the difficulty of the detection—that there are no confederates necessary—and no violence to alarm the people, as in burglary or murder—coupling all these circumstances with the large properties concerned, I think they invest the crime with a peculiar and exclusive character which belongs to no other species of crime against which the legislature has to guard.”

The name of Fauntleroy has long since taken its place in the history of the time as that of the most extensive, and in a bad sense, the most accomplished forger on record. The leading facts and circumstances connected with his criminalities are too numerous to

find a place in that rapidly extending roll. Yet they are facts and circumstances of important, as well as of melancholy interest, and ought not to depend upon the imperfect recollection of those who were men and women at the time, but who are every day becoming fewer and fewer. The sad history has been narrated in these pages in a somewhat condensed form; and, as a beacon and as a warning, it ought to be had in everlasting remembrance. There is probably no place in which it could be more fitly recorded than in a volume which relates the chief incidents and labours of the life of one who became the detector of these criminalities.

## CHAPTER IV.

## CORN LAWS AND CURRENCY.

“Of all things an indiscreet tampering with the trade of provisions is the most dangerous. My opinion is against an overdoing of any sort of administration, and more especially against this most momentous of all meddling on the part of authority, the meddling with the subsistence of the people.”—BURKE.

MR. DEACON HUME’S career as an author commenced in the year 1815 by the publication of an anonymous pamphlet, which he used to say was not worthy of being remembered. If he formed a correct estimate of its merits it has met with its desert, for it is either unknown, or not known to be his. The codification of the laws of the customs, which has been already noticed, was his next effort. Before we proceed to remark upon what seems to have been his third publication, attention may be directed to the circumstance, that on the 7th of December, 1833, there appeared in the *Morning Chronicle* the following notice of a meeting at Manchester:—

## “RIGHTS OF INDUSTRY.

“We copy from *Cobbett’s Register* of this day the following strange article, which bears the above title. The matter appears to us in a very serious light; but at present we cannot offer any remarks upon the sub-



ject. The Manchester paper of this day will probably notice it.

*“ Prince’s Tavern, Prince’s Street, Manchester,  
“ Monday, November 25, 1833.*

“ At a meeting called at the above time and place of the working people of Manchester, and their friends, after taking into their consideration—

“ That society in this country exhibits the strange anomaly of one part of the people working beyond their strength—another part working at worn out and other employments for very inadequate wages—and another part in a state of starvation for want of employment :

“ That eight hours’ daily labour is enough for any human being, and under proper arrangements, sufficient to afford an ample supply of food, raiment, and shelter, or the necessaries and comforts of life, and that to the remainder of his time every person is entitled for education, recreation, and sleep :

“ That the productive power of this country, aided by machinery, is so great, and so rapidly increasing, as from its misdirection to threaten danger to society by a still further fall in wages, unless some measure be adopted to reduce the hours of work, and to maintain at least the present amount of wages.”

“ It was unanimously resolved,—

“ 1. That it is desirable that they who wish to see society improved and confusion avoided, should endeavour to assist the working classes to obtain ‘for eight hours’ work the present full day’s wages,’ such eight hours to be performed between the hours of six

in the morning and six in the evening; and that this new regulation should commence on the first day of March next.

“ 2. That in order to carry the foregoing purposes into effect, a society shall be formed, to be called ‘The Society for promoting National Regeneration.’

“ 3. That persons be immediately appointed from among the workmen to visit their fellow-workmen in each trade, manufacture, and employment, in every district of the kingdom, for the purpose of communicating with them on the subject of the above resolutions, and of inducing them to determine upon their adoption.

“ 4. That persons be also appointed to visit the master-manufacturers in each trade, in every district, to explain and recommend to them the adoption of the new regulation referred to in the first resolution.

“ 5. That the persons appointed as above shall hold a meeting on Tuesday evening, the 17th of December, at eight o’clock, to report what has been done, and to determine upon future proceedings.

“ 6. That all persons engaged in gratuitous education on Sundays and during the week days, be respectfully invited to make arrangements for throwing open their schoolrooms to the working classes for two hours a day (say from one to three o’clock, or from six to eight, or any other two hours more convenient), from the 1st of March next, and that all well-disposed persons be invited to assist in promoting their education when time for such purpose has been secured to them.

“ 7. That subscriptions be now entered into in aid

of the fund to be raised by the working classes for the execution of their part of the proposed undertaking.

“ 8. That another and distinct subscription be also entered into for defraying the expenses of the persons appointed to visit the master-manufacturers, and for other general purposes.

“ 9. That the workmen and their friends use their utmost efforts to obtain further subscriptions, and that all well-disposed females be respectfully requested cordially to co-operate in this undertaking.

“ 10. That a committee of workmen and their friends be now formed,\* with power to add to their number, and to appoint a secretary and treasurer for the Manchester district of the society, described in the second resolution.

“ 11. That this committee be instructed to procure as soon as possible a convenient office in Manchester, which shall be called “The Office of the Society for National Regeneration.” †

“ 12. That circulars reporting the proceedings of this meeting be immediately printed, and sent to the masters in every trade in the United Kingdom.

\* The following is a list of the committee:—John Fielden, Esq., M.P., Joshua Milne, Esq.; George Condy, Esq.; Messrs. John Travis jun., J. W. Hodgetts, George Marshall, William Clegg, Joshua Fielden, Thomas Fielden, John Doherty, George Higginbottom, James Turner, Wm. Taylor, Philip Grant, John Wyatt, George Scott, John Scott, Joseph Scott, Henry Greavea, John Brodie, Wm. Wills, and Robert Owen, Esq.

† The office of the society is No. 48, Pall-mall, corner of King-street.

“ 13. That such masters as may be disposed to adopt the proposed regulation for reducing the hours of work, and paying the same wages, are hereby respectfully invited to signify their consent by letter (post paid), addressed to the office of the society in Manchester.

“ 14. That the catechism now read, entitled “ The Catechism of the Society for Promoting National Regeneration,” be adopted.

“ 15. That Messrs. Oastler, Wood, Bull, Sadler, and others, be urgently requested to desist from soliciting Parliament for a ten hours’ bill, and use their utmost exertions in aid of the measures now adopted to carry into effect, on the 1st of March next, the regulation of ‘ eight hours’ work for the present full day’s wages.’

“ 16. That the thanks of the meeting are hereby given to the aforesaid gentlemen, for their long-continued invaluable services in the cause of the oppressed of the working classes, and especially in the cause of the children and young persons employed in factories.

“ 17. That Mr. Owen be requested to establish committees of the society for national regeneration in every place or district which he may visit, especially in the Potteries, Birmingham, Worcester, Gloucester, Leicester, Derby, and London; and that he be also requested to report to the office of the society at Manchester the names of such individuals as will assist in the present undertaking.

“ 18. That in the first week in January next, the working men in every district throughout Great Britain

and Ireland shall make application to their employers for their concurrence in the adoption of the regulation of 'eight hours' work for the present full day's wages,' to commence on the 1st day of March next.

"19. That this meeting earnestly appeal to their fellow-men in France, Germany, and the other countries of Europe, and on the continent of America, for their support and co-operation in this effort to improve the condition of the labourer in all parts of the world.

"JOSHUA MILNE, *Chairman.*"

These proceedings induced Mr. Hume to address a number of letters to the editor of the *Morning Chronicle*, which were not only published, but supported by leading articles, in the columns of that journal. They attracted great attention at the time, and they have never been forgotten. The *Quarterly Review*, in an article on the Corn Laws,\* after expressing great alarm at the language of the *Times* upon the subject, observed, "The same cry is the uniform burden of innumerable articles upon this subject in the *Morning Chronicle*. Its active correspondent, H. B. T., has just published his letters in a separate form, and he is known to be a gentleman holding an important office under Government, namely, Mr. Hume, of the Board of Trade."

These letters which have become scarce, and have been sought after in vain by several leading statesmen of the present day, contain within a limited compass,

\* No. 101. June, 1834.

admirable arguments, and characteristic illustrations upon the subject of the corn laws and currency, and of the rights of industry. They will ever be valued by all who can relish clearness of perception, and cogency of argument, expressed in a style well calculated to convey both. Notwithstanding all that had been said and written on the currency question, he placed it in a new light. Admitting in their fullest extent the principles of Mr. Huskisson, and the other bullionists, he pounces upon an important oversight in the application of their principles. The banks, he observed, were urged to contract their issues; but during the period of the Berlin and Milan decrees, the prices of all goods exportable from this country to the Continent, were so much higher on the Continent than here, that there would have been an immense profit in exporting them; and nothing but physical impossibility prevented their entrance into the Continent. Lord Overstone—and a more competent judge it would be difficult to mention—recently expressed his high opinion of the sagacity, and the enlightened views which characterised these letters. While Mr. Disraeli considers the part which relates to the currency as the ablest of Mr. Deacon Hume's productions. So decided an advocate for protective duties could not be expected to say more.

The title which the Author prefixed to the letters in their more permanent form is, "Letters on the Corn Laws, and on the Rights of the Working Classes; showing the injustice, and also the impolicy of empowering those among a people who have obtained the proprietary

possession of the lands of a country, to increase, artificially, the money value of their exclusive estates, by means of arbitrary charges made on the rest of the people for the necessaries of life." And to this he added the following introductory remarks.

"These letters have already appeared in the *Morning Chronicle*, in the precise words in which they are now re-printed. The first of the number, for they are not a series, was the produce of a sudden thought suggested by the circumstance to which it refers. Those that follow bespeak the manner of their growth, and evince, too, in that growth, the danger of launching an extensive topic. If the effort of an humble individual like myself could turn into a legitimate course the struggles which the working classes are making in search—as I would say, rather than in defence or in assertion—of their rights, I should highly value my success. There is really nothing wanting to complete all the attainable comforts of which their situations are susceptible except the free exercise of their rights: and if they could be brought to claim that freedom with half the zeal and energy with which they follow phantoms, or invade the freedom of others, they would soon experience the advantage of coming before the tribunal of public opinion with a good cause.

"The plain and strong truths with which these letters might arm them, whenever they should be disposed to employ such weapons, must escape from view and pass out of remembrance, if they have no other depository than the fugitive columns of a newspaper: and perhaps

the same fate may await them in these pages; but I am urged to afford them this second chance. If I had not believed that I could place before the public, in new and useful lights, some of those important subjects which have so much agitated the country at various times, and which are still far from being at rest, neither those columns nor these pages would have been encumbered with those thoughts; and every reader will allow that I could have had none of *that* temptation to write which often leads men who are masters of composition to exercise their pens, while they have really no new matter to communicate. I shall be disappointed if such pens be not employed in giving force to the propositions with which, in homely strain, these letters may supply them. Both writers and speakers may here find materials which they may turn to much better account than I have.

"The subject is left in an incomplete state, but none of the leading features are wanting. If hereafter it should appear necessary to follow out to their more perfect conclusions any of the propositions which the letters contain, the columns of the *Morning Chronicle* will be again open to me. I am indebted to the editor of that paper not only for the space he has afforded me, but also for many accompanying leading articles, in which he has proved—what I have above intimated—that my propositions will gain strength in other hands.

"The idea that it is either just or politic to 'protect' land, while by 'protection' is meant the taxing of the great body of the people who have no land, for the



private emolument of the small number who hold against the rest, in exclusive proprietary right, the whole superficies of their common country, is so erroneous, that its prevalence would excite the greatest wonder if the history of the human mind did not give ample proof, that fallacies can be established and long maintained by the mere effrontery of continual assertion. The idea, also, that a country can possibly be benefitted by propping up with extraneous funds any losing trade, and every trade which requires support is a losing one to the country, involves an error equally surprising, and in most respects of a similar description. But the climax of fallacies is that which proceeds upon the assumption that 'taxation' is a reason for 'protection.' What would be said of the head of a house who increased his allowances to some of the favourite members of his family, only because his estate had become involved in debts? All these errors have here been pretty closely sifted; they are to be traced to the want of a just conception in men's minds of the aggregate character of a 'public.'

"No man can take a comprehensive view of the affairs of England without embracing the subject of currency. I have not been able to keep clear of it; and it has been long evident to me that the habit, useless if not dangerous, of constantly referring to the high price of gold during the last five or six years of the war, either as accounting for our difficulties or as pointing to a desperate remedy for them, tended at least to divert the minds of the people from the con-

sideration of measures which might be beneficial. I have endeavoured to show, that the doctrines of the bullionists of that era, infallible as they are in all the cases assumed, and in the illustrations assumed of them by their expounders, are amenable to physical impossibilities, and were therefore, quite inapplicable to the events of the times *in which* those persons wrote, but *upon which* they were most strangely silent."

### RIGHTS OF THE WORKING CLASSES.

#### LETTER I.

*To the Editor of the MORNING CHRONICLE.*

SIR,

*December 13, 1833.*

In your paper of December the 7th, under the above title, you give from *Cobbett* an account of a meeting at Manchester, held on the 25th of November, and convened for the purpose of forming a society, of a most extensive description, for the benefit of the working classes. This society, it appears, is to be named the "Society for Promoting National Regeneration," and the nature of the regeneration proposed is, an alleviation of the severity of the labour, with which alone, even the most successful portion of the working classes are now enabled to obtain the necessaries and comforts of life; while the other portions waste their existence in toil and privations, or in idleness and want.

At this meeting, a string of resolutions, nineteen in number, professed to be founded on three premised axioms, were passed, for the purpose of originating such a society; and upon those axioms, from which the views and expectations of the parties are to be learned, I propose to offer a few observations.

And, first, with reference generally to the "rights of industry," I will state my opinion, that the object propounded in these axioms is laudable, though not so for the reasons they contain. I think, too, that the object is attainable, though not so by the means intended to be used. The parties have a good cause, which they are ruining from want of judgment in the management of it. They are seeking that which is justly their right; but, by a strange perversion, they are not seeking it as a right—they have

not even attempted to show a right. They are, in my honest opinion, pressed down by grievous wrongs, and yet they have not attempted to point out a single wrong. The grievances they complain of may be, for aught they show, the uncontrollable effect of natural causes, and they may be upbraiding Heaven when they profess only to censure man.

The state of society described in the first of these axioms is not necessarily the "anomaly"\* which the propounders of it, without proof or explanation, pronounce it to be; but still it is very anomalous, and I have long thought it so, upon grounds which I will presently state.

In their second axiom they assert that "eight hours' daily labour is sufficient to provide an ample supply of food, raiment, and shelter, or the necessaries and comforts of life." It is evident that this, which professes to be an estimate, is founded upon no calculation whatever; and I suspect that the propounders of the axiom believe that the success of the measure depends solely upon the unanimity of the workmen in resolving, at all hazards, right or wrong, to work no more than the time proposed.

I am sure that no man can, before the trial, tell exactly what quantity of human labour may be sufficient, supposing that no labour were wasted, and that every man were left at liberty to enjoy the fruits of his labour. But although I would not pretend to give a specific estimate, as these parties have done, it is nevertheless manifest to my mind, that much less human labour than is now bestowed would, in the case of the economy and liberty here supposed, be sufficient for the purposes desired. But this liberty, which is the only means by which this object can be attained—by which wasteful labour may be avoided,† and the fruits of judicious labour dispensed—this liberty they have not

\* If the writer of this axiom would either place himself in some country which is in a far less advanced state than England, or place himself back a century or two in England itself, he would see that the evils he speaks of may be the natural effect of the actual condition of a people.

† If it were possible to make a calculation of the quantity of human labour that is wasted—positively thrown away—in consequence of different countries striving to produce commodities for which they have not the best facilities, the mind of man would turn with disgust from the contemplation of protective systems.

even demanded, neither have they so much as hinted at the privation of it under which they suffer. Surely they are not, all the while, hankering each after his own petty and fallacious share of the supposed advantages of our present wretched system; and yet, I am sorry to say, I can extract nothing from their scheme except a cry of “good wages and little work.”

The third axiom evinces the utter misconception of the matter at issue, which pervades the minds of the propounders. What does their scheme propose? Is it not “an ample supply of all necessary and comfortable commodities, the produce of human labour, in return for *little* human labour?” And yet they point to “productive power,” and “the aid which machinery gives to that power,” as the impediment to their obtaining that supply, except by the exertion of *much* human labour. There is ground for suspecting some of these parties of a selfishness lurking at the bottom of the scheme, a want of intention to render the proposed benefit universal. A cry of “high wages and little work,” accompanied by a complaint against “productive power,” implies that some must still work hard for poor remuneration. And this suspicion is a little increased by the consideration of another error in this axiom, which is, that they shift their demand for the “necessaries and comforts of life” to a demand for a certain rate of wages as a minimum, that is to say, “the present rate of wages at least.” So that, if it shall turn out that in consequence of their working less, and of a check to “productive power,” the prices of commodities, from scarcity, shall rise, their wages are to rise in proportion. These incongruities are pointed out only as a friendly warning, with a view to direct the Society in a right course, and not to deter them from proceeding.

It is impossible to say what wages would be effective for the object in view, either in the case of its being pursued in the manner I would recommend, or in the manner obviously contemplated by the promoters of the Society. Neither the exact quantity of labour nor the exact exchangeable value of labour for labour, expressed in money, can be told beforehand; it is enough to be confident, as we well may be, that an increased quantity of the necessaries and comforts of life is obtainable for a reduced quantity of human labour. The Society must change their line of tactics: they must distinctly exhibit, and simply demand their rights; and, those once obtained, the particular

benefits sought for will so surely follow, that they will be within the reach of every discreet and industrious man. I trust that they will cheerfully assent to the exclusion of the idle and dissolute.

What is the great desideratum? It is abundance upon easy terms. What are the sources of abundance? They are rich soils—favourable climates—skill in cultivation, and facility of conveyance, in respect of the products of land, whether they be food of man, or of animals for the service of man, or be the materials of manufactures. And in respect of other commodities, the sources of abundance are raw materials, derived from the most productive places—skill in converting those materials into the articles wanted—machinery for saving human labour in the process, and strength for setting that machinery in motion, drawn by science from some power of nature that never wearies. These are the sources from which abundance is to be obtained by the least possible exertion of human labour. If we refuse to apply to these sources, with what pretence can we complain of want? If we resolve to employ labour to waste, with what pretence can we complain of toil?

The extent to which, in the last half-century, mankind have acquired a knowledge of the means of rendering these sources available is very great. The inventions and improvements of machinery, and of its moving powers, are too notorious to need more than to be mentioned; but, to the minds of many persons, those in agriculture may not be equally palpable. I shall, therefore, just say, that the extensive introduction of the turnip and the clover, and the invention of hollow-draining, have been, in husbandry, scarcely less operative than machinery and steam have been in manufactures. By means of these two esculents, vast tracts of light land, which were formerly deemed of insignificant value, have not only produced abundance of food for animals, but have also been thrown into a course of crops by which they have been qualified for the growth of corn; and by the invention of the hollow drain, a very great quantity of good lands, which could not before be cultivated on account of their springs and underwaters, have been reclaimed from a state of useless swamp. If, in consequence of bringing two very extensive descriptions of land into productive cultivation, which had previously been unproductive, another description, the "stiff clays," have become less profitable than before, we must bear in mind that similar vicissi-

tudes have occurred in other interests. It is probable, no doubt, that some lands, which can be worked only with extreme labour, must now be appropriated to permanent crops of some description ; for the progress of the country cannot be arrested for the sake of attempting to prevent this consequence of improvements in agriculture. Such an attempt would amount to an open avowal, that the public shall derive no benefit from such improvements. What, indeed, could we do ? Would we prohibit turnips and clover, or give a bounty for cultivating "stiff clays ?" or would we raise the price of corn grown upon all lands, the fortunate as well as the unfortunate, until it can be profitably grown on those which alone are in difficulty ?

Putting aside, therefore, the lands unfit, under present circumstances, for corn, as we would discard old machinery, I repeat, that in agriculture, as well as in manufactures, there has been a great access of productive power in the last half-century.\* Had this not been the case, it would have been the extreme of folly to have talked of obtaining "an ample supply of necessaries and comforts for a small amount of labour."

The Society invite "their fellow-men in France, Germany, and the other countries of Europe, to give their support and co-operation." My scheme embraces them also ; it is not even practicable without them ; nor, indeed, without my "fellow-men" in Asia, and Africa, and America too. Abundance is my end, mutual consumption is my means. I must have the world for my workshop, and the world for my customer. Let any man compute the productive powers of the world in the present state of knowledge, and then refuse, if he can, to rely on the sources of abundance ;—let him reflect on the appalling extent of human wants unsatisfied, and then doubt, if he can, the efficacy of consumption. There is scarcely a civilized spot in the globe in which the now impoverished labourer cannot produce, in excess of his own wants, some peculiar commodity with which he could

\* In comparing the prices of corn of the present times with the prices of former times, we must make the same allowance for improvements in agriculture as we do for improvements in machinery with respect to manufactures. In such comparisons, the progressive depreciation of the value of money is one consideration ; but we are apt to forget that the progress of art is another, which is to be placed in the opposite scale.

provide himself with those other commodities he so greatly needs, if his right of exchange were not denied by the interposition of some arbitrary power. Mutual supply by means of such exchange is the scheme, and it is the law of nature, loudly proclaimed by the diversities of climate, soil, and capacities,—it is a manifest design of a beneficent Providence for the benefit of the human race. But what is the law of man?—an impious prohibition of the law of God. I figure to myself the family of a Manchester or Birmingham workman, contemplating on a Saturday night the true exchangeable value of their week's work; and computing how much food, as well as other commodities, it would supply them with, under the free operation of the scheme of Providence and of the law of Nature. I also figure to myself the family of the Polish husbandman longing to doff their miserable dresses of sheep-skin, and to exchange their corn for fabrics of the spindle and the loom. A greater offence can hardly be committed than to obstruct the mutual dealings of such parties, except it can be justified as a necessary national sacrifice. I stoutly deny the nationality of the object: the restraint is nothing less than a taking of the necessaries of life from those who have nothing to spare, in order to increase the luxuries of those whose command of them would bear reduction—supposing, but by no means admitting, that any reduction would ensue.

I cannot find room here to establish this proposition before those to whom it may not be sufficiently self-evident; upon another occasion, if necessary, I may perhaps do so, but at present, assuming the admission of the truth—that there is no national ground for any protection to our home productions beyond that which may incidentally arise out of duties imposed for the sake of revenue—I earnestly advise the members of the proposed Society, if it be eventually formed, to apply themselves with singleness of purpose to all fitting efforts for obtaining their *right to the fruits of their labour*:—a right which no man can be said to enjoy, unless he be at liberty to make the most advantageous exchange he can of the product of his own labour for that of the labour of others. Let them pursue this course, and, if they succeed, the agricultural and landed interests will be among the first to acknowledge the merits of the “Society for Promoting National Regeneration.”

I am, Sir, your humble servant,

H. B. T.

## LETTER II.

To the Editor of the MORNING CHRONICLE.

SIR,

30th December, 1833.

I thank you for the insertion of my former letter in your paper of the 18th instant, and also for the excellent leading article with which, at the same time, you supported the object of it. If you can again afford me a little space in your columns, I will endeavour, more pointedly than before, to show to the members of the "National Regeneration Society," that their distresses consist in *their being compelled, by natural causes, to seek a foreign market as sellers of the goods they produce, while they are prevented by artificial causes, from going into that market as buyers of the goods which they want.*

Few people are aware of the relative positions in which our manufacturing interest and our landed interest are practically placed towards each other, by reason of the different proportions which the gross quantities of their respective productions bear to the consumption of the country; and consequently few persons perceive the degree in which this natural inequality of advantages is aggravated by the interposition of a law which throws its weight to the side which already preponderates. If any interference between these two interests could be justified, a far better case could be made out in favour of a bounty to increase the importation of corn, than of a duty to restrain it.

My first position is, that the agriculturists have, under any circumstances, the enviable advantage of always selling their goods at home in a market insufficiently supplied.

My second position is, that the manufacturer when he sells any of his goods at home, always sells them in a glutted market. These are facts which can be readily ascertained by referring to the accounts of imports and exports.

The average annual quantity of foreign corn, chiefly wheat, imported into England during the last seven years, was very nearly two million quarters; besides which, we imported large quantities of seeds, and of butter and cheese. One-third, at least, of all the tallow we use comes from abroad; and we import vegetable oils as a substitute for tallow in making soap, and fish oils as its substitute in lieu of candles. This account might be considerably extended, without including any product which is not suitable to our soil and climate; but it is sufficient for the purpose



of showing that the agriculturist has the advantage of a home market, in which the demand is much greater than the supply.

The amount in real (not official) value of British manufactures exported in each of the last two years, was rather more than 36,000,000*l.*, and nearly the whole of this sum is constituted of labour. Cotton wool, fine sheep's wool, flax, and dyeing drugs, are the chief of those raw materials of our exports, which we do not produce; the metals and the coals are in our own mines, till labour extracts them. Making, therefore, ample abatement for foreign materials, the quantity of surplus labour in the country, that which seeks a foreign market—may be roundly estimated at thirty millions sterling a year. The home market of the manufacturer, therefore, is always a glutted market.

These are the relative positions of the two interests; and I beg the "Society" to mark the 'practical effect of these two positions upon their mutual dealings—first, as buyers respectively, the one *from* the other; and next, as sellers respectively, the one *to* the other. For the sake of perspicuity, I must be allowed here, to use a little personification, and to concentrate, in the proceedings of two imaginary individuals, the course of transactions which do actually take place between the two masses. A landowner and a manufacturer are the parties. Wheat may be the representative of agricultural produce, and cottons the representative of manufactures.

The landowner has one hundred quarters of wheat to sell, the whole of which, and more, is wanted by the manufacturer. The manufacturer has two hundred pieces of cotton to sell, half only of which is wanted by the landowner. As the quantity of the one is deficient, and the quantity of the other is excessive in their mutual home market, the prices of both must be governed by the foreign market, the influence of which upon them will be manifested by inverse consequences, the case of the one being the reverse of that of the other. The question between them shall be tried under the assumption of a state of free-trade to both.

When the landowner is seller, he is enabled, in fixing the price on his wheat, to add to the amount of the foreign price, all the expense which must be incurred by bringing wheat from abroad. He stands firm in the market, and says to the manufacturer, reject my wheat if it please you to do so, and go a thousand miles by water and by land to fetch the cheap wheat you speak of.

But when the landowner changes his position, and becomes the buyer of the manufacturer's cottons, he reverses his calculation, and he deducts from the price which they would fetch in the foreign market, all the expenses of sending them thither. Nor is his language less changed, though it is equally peremptory. He now says to the manufacturer, there is my offer, leave it if you like, and carry your cottons half round the world, in quest of that better price which you say will be given for them in other countries.

Whether as buyer of the wheat, or as seller of the cottons, the manufacturer submits to this dictation of the landowner; for it is he, and not the landowner, who is, in both cases, subject to the control of the foreign prices; and the result is, that he gives one hundred pieces of cottons for fifty quarters of wheat. But this is only half the story; and the picture here drawn gives a very inadequate representation of the natural advantages which the landowner has over the manufacturer, and of the consequent injustice of increasing that advantage by artificial means.

We have seen that the first use which the landowner makes of his power over the manufacturer is, to supply himself with home commodities to his heart's content, in exchange for a moderate quantity of his corn. He has got, for instance, one hundred pieces of cottons, for fifty of his one hundred quarters of wheat; and now, feeling himself still rich with fifty quarters more at his command, a desire comes over him for the enjoyment of foreign luxuries also; and he is anxious, therefore, to make his remaining stock of wheat available for the procuring of them. But when he contemplates the sending of his wheat to foreign market, he is quickly struck with the reflection that, if he does so, he must not only submit to take the foreign price for it, but he must also deduct from that price the charges of exportation, instead of adding the charges of importation, as he had done in the case of the first fifty quarters. After some deliberation upon the course he should pursue, he comes to the following conclusion: I remember, he says, that the manufacturer of whom I bought my hundred pieces of cotton, had another hundred for which he could not find a purchaser, and well know he was sorely in want of more wheat than the fifty quarters I have sold to him. I will e'en carry to him the residue of my wheat, and offer it for the residue of his cottons; in his double distress, with glut on the one side, and defi-

they do so solely because of the protection conceded to agriculture, the subject may be examined with reference to land alone.

The plea of the Corn Act is, the great amount of the taxes levied for the purpose of paying interest on the loans raised during the late war to defray the expenses of it; for it is not pretended that the debt, as it stood before the war, would furnish any ground for such a plea. Why, under any circumstances whatever, the landed interest is not to pay any part of these taxes, or to be indemnified for what they do pay, I am wholly at a loss to conjecture; but when the real circumstances of the case come to be investigated, it will be found, that if it can be fair for any interest of the country to be invested with a power of indemnifying itself for its own portion of that burden, by making surcharges upon another interest, then, I say, that the trading interest would be entitled to throw their share of the burden upon the land; and I am not afraid of establishing this proposition, supposing that such a species of favouritism could be allowed.

The efforts made, and the adroitness employed by every branch of trade to throw off from itself the burden of any tax affecting its transactions, are the subject of common observation; and provided that none be armed against their neighbours with any law for that purpose, the various parties may be left to adjust the matter among themselves as they can. But, even in the absence of any such law, there is one most important interest in this country, on whose back some of the burden, beyond its own share, after it has been shifted from shoulder to shoulder a dozen deep, must ultimately fall, and there rest. *I allude to our export manufacturers.*

This country, as compared with any other in the world, is a rich, high-priced country. The parties, therefore, who raise, or make the commodities, which are wholly consumed at home, may measure their respective exactions by the scale of English prices;\* but they who make the surplus which must be exported, are forced to conform to the scale of foreign prices. When, therefore, the burden has reached these parties, it will remain upon them as the last in the rank, having none beyond them upon whom they can throw it. But, although they cannot throw on the foreigner

\* These parties, at all events, think so, which is enough for the present argument; but they will find themselves mistaken in the long run.

exporter and importer; for the operation of the Corn Acts is, to give him a right of pre-emption of our manufactures at an enormous price.

I have examined this proposition with an honest intention to abandon it if it be wrong; but I cannot find in it a failing point. It is true that, of agricultural produce, we chiefly import wheat, but that is only because wheat is the most concentrated form in which a given quantity of agricultural produce can be imported, and the price of it has its influence over all other produce of the land. It is also true that our exports consist chiefly of cottons and hardware; but the prices at which they can be disposed of abroad, must necessarily govern the prices of our other manufactures. The magnitude of the exports proves that their influence over the whole industry of the country must be overpowering. While the Corn Act lasts, the landed interest must have the power of dictating prices, both as seller and as buyer. The only way to effect the "national regeneration" which the society desires is, to place all sellers and all buyers upon an equal footing.

If I should be permitted to trespass again upon your paper, I will avail myself of your indulgence in an endeavour to convince the landed interest that they have mistaken their policy quite as much as they have mistaken their rights.

I am, Sir, your humble servant,  
H. B. T.

---

LETTER III.

*To the Editor of the MORNING CHRONICLE.*

SIR,

January 10, 1834.

The reception which you have given to my two former letters has convinced me, not only that you take the same view that I do of the true interests of the working classes, but also that you are willing to afford me opportunities of advocating their cause in my own way. It is apparent to you, as it is to me, that the working classes have only to obtain the restoration of their natural rights, "the rights of industry," *the liberty of exchanging, in the most advantageous manner they can, the products of their own labour for those of the labour of others*, and they will gain all they seek. By the simple exercise of those rights, under the free play, in all other respects, of the ordinary rules, habits, and maxims of civilized society; without asking favour of one body of men, or

they do so solely because of the protection conceded to agriculture, the subject may be examined with reference to land alone.

The plea of the Corn Act is, the great amount of the taxes levied for the purpose of paying interest on the loans raised during the late war to defray the expenses of it; for it is not pretended that the debt, as it stood before the war, would furnish any ground for such a plea. Why, under any circumstances whatever, the landed interest is not to pay any part of these taxes, or to be indemnified for what they do pay, I am wholly at a loss to conjecture; but when the real circumstances of the case come to be investigated, it will be found, that if it can be fair for any interest of the country to be invested with a power of indemnifying itself for its own portion of that burden, by making surcharges upon another interest, then, I say, that the trading interest would be entitled to throw their share of the burden upon the land; and I am not afraid of establishing this proposition, supposing that such a species of favouritism could be allowed.

The efforts made, and the adroitness employed by every branch of trade to throw off from itself the burden of any tax affecting its transactions, are the subject of common observation; and provided that none be armed against their neighbours with any law for that purpose, the various parties may be left to adjust the matter among themselves as they can. But, even in the absence of any such law, there is one most important interest in this country, on whose back some of the burden, beyond its own share, after it has been shifted from shoulder to shoulder a dozen deep, must ultimately fall, and there rest. *I allude to our export manufacturers.*

This country, as compared with any other in the world, is a rich, high-priced country. The parties, therefore, who raise, or make the commodities, which are wholly consumed at home, may measure their respective exactions by the scale of English prices;\* but they who make the surplus which must be exported, are forced to conform to the scale of foreign prices. When, therefore, the burden has reached these parties, it will remain upon them as the last in the rank, having none beyond them upon whom they can throw it. But, although they cannot throw on the foreigner

\* These parties, at all events, think so, which is enough for the present argument; but they will find themselves mistaken in the long run.

There is nothing in Mr. Owen's scheme of society which is not of the very essence of society, in its national form. He proposes that a large body of people shall agree together to employ themselves in the manner which shall produce the greatest quantity of ease and comfort for them all. The people of this country would spontaneously fall into the very division of employments which would produce this consequence if they were left to themselves. It is only because the pictured results of Mr. Owen's plan are the proper results of a well-constituted society as a nation, and therefore natural to the imagination, that it has attracted any attention. There is a consciousness of the perfection to which common society might be brought, if all men would perform their respective parts ; and the mind dwells with pleasure on the descriptions of new arrangements that are to produce a degree of happiness which it feels ought not to be unattainable. The wild schemes, which are occasionally proposed for removing the evils of society, are generated by that wildest of all, by which those very evils are produced—the officious legislative management of men's affairs in their private, and not their public capacities. It is by such a system, and by that alone, that industry is deprived of its rights. It is not by such a system that the rights of property are maintained ; perhaps they are endangered by it.

I have indulged in these general observations out of the great anxiety I feel that the “ Society for Promoting National Regeneration ” should have a just conception of that true “ regeneration ” which the simple reduction to practice of sound principles of trade must produce. It is necessary thus to keep before them the end and object of these letters ; but the manner in which that object will chiefly be pursued will be, by bringing out into prominent view some of those strong features of the question at issue, which, as it appears to me, have been much overlooked in all the discussions upon it.

There are parts of the subject of taxation which stand in the obscurity alluded to, although bearing strongly upon the question of protection. The magnitude of the National Debt, and the necessity it creates of raising a large revenue by taxes, is constantly assigned as the principal reason, and often as the only reason, for our protective system. By none more than the landed interest is this plea advanced ; and as the various trades, which continue to call for protection to themselves, often declare that

they do so solely because of the protection conceded to agriculture, the subject may be examined with reference to land alone.

The plea of the Corn Act is, the great amount of the taxes levied for the purpose of paying interest on the loans raised during the late war to defray the expenses of it; for it is not pretended that the debt, as it stood before the war, would furnish any ground for such a plea. Why, under any circumstances whatever, the landed interest is not to pay any part of these taxes, or to be indemnified for what they do pay, I am wholly at a loss to conjecture; but when the real circumstances of the case come to be investigated, it will be found, that if it can be fair for any interest of the country to be invested with a power of indemnifying itself for its own portion of that burden, by making surcharges upon another interest, then, I say, that the trading interest would be entitled to throw their share of the burden upon the land; and I am not afraid of establishing this proposition, supposing that such a species of favouritism could be allowed.

The efforts made, and the adroitness employed by every branch of trade to throw off from itself the burden of any tax affecting its transactions, are the subject of common observation; and provided that none be armed against their neighbours with any law for that purpose, the various parties may be left to adjust the matter among themselves as they can. But, even in the absence of any such law, there is one most important interest in this country, on whose back some of the burden, beyond its own share, after it has been shifted from shoulder to shoulder a dozen deep, must ultimately fall, and there rest. *I allude to our export manufacturers.*

This country, as compared with any other in the world, is a rich, high-priced country. The parties, therefore, who raise, or make the commodities, which are wholly consumed at home, may measure their respective exactions by the scale of English prices; \* but they who make the surplus which must be exported, are forced to conform to the scale of foreign prices. When, therefore, the burden has reached these parties, it will remain upon them as the last in the rank, having none beyond them upon whom they can throw it. But, although they cannot throw on the foreigner

\* These parties, at all events, think so, which is enough for the present argument; but they will find themselves mistaken in the long run.

any portion of that burden, they can receive from him the support and succour which will enable them to bear it, if they are not precluded from doing so by any arbitrary restraint—such as that which they suffer under the Corn Act. Thus it appears, that in the absence even of all protection to agriculture, the landed interest have not only the advantages pointed out in my last letter, as sellers of their own goods, and as buyers of the goods of others, but they have also the advantage of being able to shift from themselves a large part of the burden of the taxes which they appear to bear. Unless, therefore, it can be broadly propounded as a principle, that the landed interest, like the old privileged classes in France, whom they would do well to remember, ought to be relieved from the fiscal burdens of the State, it will be impossible to maintain that the National Debt can be a plea for the Corn Act.

And here I must explain the peculiar difficulty which I experience in discussing this great subject. I consider the Corn Act to be the most signal failure that can be found in the domestic history of the country; because I do not entertain a doubt, that if the ports had been thrown open at the end of the war for the admission of corn, free of duty, or at a moderate duty only, for the sake only of revenue, the prosperity of our trade would have been such as to have secured to the farmers a much better price for their produce than they are now obtaining. To say, therefore, as I distinctly do, that the Corn Act raises the price of agricultural produce sufficiently to indemnify the landed interest for all the taxes which fall, in the first instance, either upon their trade or upon their personal consumption, sounds like a contradictory assertion. But, still, such is the case; because, taking the trade in its present depressed and limited state, and taking the prices of agricultural produce at what they would be without a Corn Bill, if trade still remained in that state, the Corn Bill adds to those prices a sum which, in the aggregate, is more than equal to all the State taxes paid in any shape by the landed interest. In saying this, I say no more than they say themselves; the protection they cling to reaches them only in the form of increased prices of corn and meat; and as we may almost despair of their discovering that they might have those prices, and better too, without protection, it is necessary to try the justice of their claims upon their own showing, lest we fail of convincing them of their impolicy.



Upon the commonest principles of justice, and even supposing that there had been nothing peculiar to the case of the landed interest in the circumstances under which the National Debt accumulated during the late war, they can have no claim to be exonerated from the payment of their share of the interest of it, by means of a law which should enable them to make heavy surcharges upon the other branches of the community. Upon a little examination, however, properly directed to the true points of the question, it will be seen that the landed interest is the very last in the country which should object to bear its portion of that burden.

My proposition is this:—The expenses of the State during the war were enormously increased by a contemporaneous enhancement of the prices of all agricultural produce; the loans raised to defray those expenses were proportionately the larger; and in the expenditure of those loans, a very great part of them passed into the pockets of the landed interest in the shape of extraordinary profits.

I shall conclude that the two first branches of this proposition will need no proof. Neither can it be doubted that a large portion of the loans was paid away in extraordinary prices for corn, meat, timber, &c., or that the general expenditure of the Government, as well as that of every individual in the country, was greatly increased by the high prices of agricultural produce. The only question therefore is, whether those prices gave extraordinary profits to the landed interest; or, in other words, whether the cause of those high prices lay in the cost of production, or in some incidental extraneous circumstances.

The war broke out in 1793—and in 1792 we had exported a considerable quantity of corn—the average price of wheat being then under 44s. per quarter. The war, therefore, began upon low prices and a surplus produce; and as the era of peace had closed with a year of exportation, we have pretty good proof that, previously to the war, British and foreign prices could not have widely differed from each other. In a short time afterwards importation upon a large scale commenced, accompanied by a great rise of prices, and by every other indication, that a demand had sprung up which our home agriculture was totally unable to satisfy. That this demand was real and permanent is proved by the quantities imported during a long series of years; that it was an

efficient demand is proved by the prices given ; that it was caused by an increased consumption and not by any falling off of our home produce, is proved by the whole history of our agriculture during the war, which gives one continued account of agricultural success and proclaimed improvements.

With a demand so urgent, and with a power of purchasing so effectual, the consumption price of the corn derived from abroad would depend solely upon the amount of the charges of importation which were to be added to the foreign cost. By reason of circumstances peculiar to the late war, as distinguished from all former wars, those charges were rendered particularly heavy ; and as there could not, of course, be two prices for the same commodity in one market, the amount of those charges was added to the natural price of English corn, although not one shilling of them was incurred upon it.

This was the sole cause of the “war prices” of our agricultural produce ; and when we consider that upon the strength of those prices rents were doubled, and in many cases trebled, while the affluent circumstances of the tenantry was the subject of general remark, I think that we need have little difficulty in deciding, that the cause of those prices was wholly independent of the cost of production, and that they did confer on the landed interest an enormous amount of extraordinary—that is, of unusual and unearned—profits. If any further proof of the true cause of the high prices of British corn during the war were wanting, it might be found in the fact, that the fall in those prices which took place immediately after the war, was accurately measured by the reduction of the charges of importation ; and what is very remarkable, and must throw some doubt over the opinion that the high prices were materially attributable to the depreciation of our currency, is, that as the price of foreign corn fell, and with it the price of British corn, the prices of all our manufactures and colonial produce, although we held of them enormous stocks, greatly rose, and together with them, the value of our paper currency rose also, in the face of an increased issue to a considerable amount. These are undisputed facts. I cannot here undertake to reason upon them, but I think it is so necessary to divest the corn question of all the false colouring under which it has been constantly presented to public view, that, if you will permit me, I will at another time endeavour to show, that however much embarrassed other interests

might have been by the high price of gold in the last years of the war, the effect of that price was beneficial to the landed interest; it worked *for* them, while it was working *against* all the other interests of the country.

I have now delivered in my "Bill of Charges" against the landed interest, upon account of the National Debt; and I debit them with some hundred millions. They have had the money. Had they taken care of it, it would have been better for the country as well as for themselves; for, by their extravagant expenditure as income of such immense sums, which were more properly of the nature of principal, they unwholesomely increased the whole scale of our transactions, both public and private; and they raised the interest of money against the State by a constant dispersion of capital, after it had actually collected itself in their hands. The great body of landowners ought, at this day, to be the principal stockholders. The two terms should be almost synonymous; and instead of the word "mortgage" being the echo of the word "land," the possession of an estate of "five thousand a year" should imply the accompaniment of "fifty thousand consols." All mortgages ought, certainly, to have been paid off during the "war prices;" but, instead of seizing so fair and unlooked for an opportunity of clearing their estates, the landowners exhibited their enlarged rentals only as security for more advances; and they became competitors with the State in the money market as borrowers, when they ought to have entered it as the principal lenders,

I am, Sir, your humble servant,

H. B. T.

---

LETTER IV.

*To the Editor of the MORNING CHRONICLE.*

SIR,

16th January, 1834.

The more particular purpose of my last letter was to show that the landed interest was the very last interest in the country which should pretend to found a claim to protection upon the magnitude of the National Debt. I then proved, first, that it was their inability to supply the country sufficiently with agricultural produce during the war that caused the debt to become so large, and next, that the excess so created went into their pockets, in the

shape of extraordinary and unearned profits upon the quantity of agricultural produce which they did supply. In following out this subject, I was naturally led to the confines of the bullion question—in which the landed interest discover fresh grounds for relieving themselves from the public burdens; and towards the close of the letter I asserted that the high price of gold, during the last years of the war, worked *for* the landed interest, while it was working *against* every other interest in the country. I now propose to prove the validity of this assertion.

The subject is peculiarly relevant, not only because of the nature of its facts, but also because of the conduct of the landed interest themselves, and of the general tenor of the observations upon it, which we have been occasionally hearing from them ever since the war was over and the time of borrowing had ceased. There is no distinguishable body of the people from whom, so much as from the landed interest, has proceeded a strain of insinuations dangerous to the public creditor, and injurious to the national faith. Language, not merely pointing to resistance, but even of opprobrium and contempt has been used by them towards the fund-holder, who, though he has escaped their direct plunder, has not escaped their abuse. When the failure of the first extravagant Corn Act became apparent, was not the sponge plainly hinted at as the next remedy? Did we not hear it said, in absolute allusion to insolvency, that “the country was not to be expected to perform impossibilities?” Were we not also frequently asked, whether the old families of the kingdom were to sit quiet until a parcel of sordid, upstart money-lenders should push them from their paternal seats? And next, when the honourable feeling of the country revolted at such suggestions, what were then their selfish schemes? Who so strenuous as the landed interest to force upon us a base currency, in order that they might pay both the fund-holder and their own mortgagee in false money? While such sentiments co-exist with political power, the country is hardly safe. The French nation, after a long and patient second trial of their old dynasty, drove them at length from the throne, solely because they proved to the last to be irreclaimable pretenders to divine right. Had the French family and their personal adherents been faithful to the conditions of their return, and renounced in their hearts as well as in their words, pretensions wholly disowned by the people who received them, Charles the Tenth would now have been

reigning—a popular monarch over satisfied subjects; the King of the Netherlands would have still had an undivided kingdom under his sway, and Poland would have remained quiet under institutions which, whatever might be the theoretical objections to them, were working much practical good towards a population deficient in the arts of industry and commerce. These are serious lessons, and it is always useful to practise the mind in conceiving what different turn affairs would have taken, under the supposition of the reversal of some event of powerful influence which has occurred. It certainly seems plain that all the political mischief we have witnessed in the last three years may be traced to that single folly in the French family, in perpetually harbouring hopes, and betraying desires and intentions of re-establishing, by the first opportunity, the principle of divine right; and if our aristocracy think that in virtue of some analogous hereditary claims, as lords of the soil, they are to perpetuate their families and their patrimonies by any other means than by their own prudent management of their estates, according to their intrinsic values, they may some day be repudiated for sentiments equally inconsistent with the natural rights, and the common sense of mankind. They have the good fortune of being placed among a people strongly attached to them by disposition and by habit, and who are sensible of the advantages, while they delight in the splendour of a high and hereditary nobility; and, therefore, if disagreement ensue, there can be no doubt as to the side on which the fault, as well as the chief sufferings must lie. But the people delight in the splendour of their nobility, only in the contemplation that it is maintained by the intrinsic resources of their own broad possessions. If the people, rich or poor, are made to support that splendour from their own means, they must cease to respect it.

The National Debt is set forth as the reason for a Corn act, upon two separate grounds. First, its quantity alone is advanced as a ground for protection; this I have already dealt with. Next, its quality—the nature of its composition, is objected to; and into this I am about to inquire.

It is charged against the monied interest by the landed interest, that the fundholder lent only depreciated bank-notes, and that, therefore, he has not any just claim to be repaid in sterling money. This argument is chiefly founded upon the very high

price of gold, computed in bank-notes, which prevailed during the last five or six years of the war; and my answer to it, for them at least, is, that that higher price of gold was, to them, a fertile source of extraordinary profits, such as must form, in their case, an ample set-off against the evil consequences they point out. The subject lies in a small compass. It has been shown that the price of English corn was raised during the war, *pari passu*, with the expenses attending the importation of foreign corn. Now one of the most material ingredients of those expenses was the high price of gold. If we examine the question with the illustrative aids of assumed sums, in figures, the amount will stand somewhat in the following manner:—The depreciation of the currency may be taken at twenty-five per cent.; the finance minister, therefore, must be supposed to have raised a loan of twenty-five millions, when twenty millions would otherwise have been sufficient for him. But then, if this additional five millions went, as I contend it did, directly into the pockets of the landed interest, without any equivalent consideration from them, they received their indemnification for the excess; the account upon the score of depreciation, was settled with them at the time, and they can have no after claim upon that ground. The question then is, whether this five millions did go into their pockets in the manner I have stated.

Every merchant remembers the great difficulty which, at the time referred to, attended the remittance of funds to the Continent to pay for our imports; and that, to exorbitant freights and heavy insurances, which, under the circumstances of the intercourse, were well earned by the parties who received them, there was to be added the loss on the foreign exchanges; or, in other words, the difference between the Mint price and the market price of gold, in making up the amount of charges on foreign corn. But although in respect of English corn which was already at home, there was of course no freight, no insurance, no remittance, still all the charges upon foreign corn under those heads, including the difference between the Mint price and the market price of gold, were simultaneously added to every quarter of English corn, as fully and specifically, shilling for shilling, as if the identical quarter had formed part of the cargo of the "Vrouw Wilhelmina, Jansen, master, from Dantzick."

Let the market prices of gold from 1797 to 1815 be examined,

and account be made out of the sums by which the respective loans, received in bank-notes, were greater than they would have been if received in gold; and then compare, year by year, the ascertained excess of those loans with an equal per-centage increase upon the prices of all the agricultural produce of the country computed in gold. If a debtor and creditor account of this nature were made out, the landed interest would be chargeable with a heavy balance, because it will be found that the prices of agricultural produce, even when computed in gold, were enormously high. By an irresistible operation of commerce, it must have occurred, that the necessity we were under of importing large quantities of foreign corn, which could not be obtained without indemnifying the foreign seller for any depreciation in our currency; that is to say, for any difference between the market and the Mint price of gold with us, would enable the home-grower to demand the same indemnification for himself. When *one* foreign hand was held out to receive the computed sum, *twenty* English hands were thrust forward at the same time, with the same demand, and the same sum was put into each of them.

The immense importance to us of the single fact, that the national agriculture proved to be inadequate to the feeding of the people during the war, has never been properly adverted to; and consequently the true character and operation of that fact has escaped observation. Strange to say, a case of absolute want and palpable distress was mistaken for prosperity. To a portion of the people, no doubt, it brought great prosperity, *but to the nation it was a positive loss, the amount of which is now represented in the form of perhaps a full fourth of our present National Debt.* To the makers of gunpowder, the manufacturers of muskets and cannons, and to the holders of saltpetre or naval stores, the breaking out of a war is the legitimate promise of a new harvest of profits; but not so to the farmer. The prices of the peculiar material of war may naturally rise with the occurrence of war, but the general food of a people need not rise also,\* unless, indeed, their country should become the seat of hostilities.

If we were to trace the occurrences of the war, and test them by the supposition that the agricultural produce of the country,

\* In the American war the value of land was very much depressed.

which was abundant up to the commencement of it, had continued to be equal to the demand, or nearly so, we should see that some of the greatest difficulties of our situation would have been avoided, or much alleviated. By nothing was the country more embarrassed than by the necessity we were under of placing large funds on the Continent, both for state and for commercial purposes, during the war, and particularly in the last five or six years of it, when our merchants were prevented, by the Berlin and Milan decrees, from rendering their merchandise—as it always ought, alone, to be—the medium of remittance; and it will easily be comprehended how greatly their difficulties must have been increased by the additional necessity of making remittances in payment for foreign corn.

The landed interest cannot suppose that I am upbraiding them with this deficiency of their produce, or that I insinuate blame to them for accepting enormous profits which, from such causes, incidentally fell into their hands. But I charge them with ridiculous arrogance, for boasting that they mainly assisted in carrying the country through the war; and with the basest ingratitude for turning round upon the country in the manner they did as soon as it was over. If the true nature of the case had been understood at the time, nothing would have been more just than to have restored, or rather preserved, in some degree the proper balance between the different interests of the country, by the imposition of a very heavy tax upon land. Any charge that was clearly less than the unusual portion of the expenses of importation on foreign corn would have been easily borne without the least derangement of our agriculture. The only effect would have been to have prevented a most uncalled-for increase of rents. The country might, with great propriety, have held this language to the agriculturists:—The calamities of war, and the difficulties under which the nation is labouring, have an incidental tendency to throw great and most unnecessary profits, at the public cost, into your hands; it is, therefore, only an act of justice to the public to call upon you to restore some of those profits to the nation, for the purposes of that state of warfare which is the sole cause and source of them. Nothing of this kind was attempted, nor is any sort of restitution desired; but when the benefited party complains, the losing party may well desire an investigation of the accounts between them. It is the particular



purpose of these letters to examine these accounts, in order that the relative situations of the several great interests of the country—the agricultural, the trading, and the moneyed interests—may be thoroughly understood.

I am confident that I cannot be wrong in saying, that the agriculturists were indemnified, in the price of their produce, for every shilling by which the National Debt was increased in consequence of the difference between the Mint price and the market price of gold, and that therefore they, of all people, should be the last to object to bearing their share of the common taxation out of which the interest of the debt is paid. Nor was this advantage confined to the landed interest, although few others had the opportunity of enjoying it; but every trade which raised or manufactured an article, of which the home supply was so much below the demand that the consumers were obliged to have recourse to importation, was enabled to add to the price of that article all the extraordinary charges of freight and insurance, as well as the loss in purchasing gold for remittance, which were necessarily incurred in bringing the like description of goods from abroad.

The difficulties which the merchants were under in making foreign payments were peculiar to the description of warfare we were carrying on. It was not that they were deficient in exportable commodities suitable to the purposes of remittance, both in quality and in price, but solely that they could not obtain admission for their goods into the continental ports, by reason of impediments of a warlike, and not of a commercial nature.

This, however, is a different subject, worthy, perhaps, of more consideration than has been bestowed upon it in any of the discussions upon our currency. I am not now investigating the cause of the high price of gold during the war, but the effect of it upon the prices of our own agricultural produce; and I trust I have shown, that in those prices the landed interest were amply indemnified for all the increase which may have been made to the National Debt in consequence of the difference between the Mint price and the market price of gold. They were indemnified in the most direct and perfect manner that can be imagined; they received the money itself, and more than the money. The rate of the indemnification was exact; and the sufficiency of the aggregate amount of it will never be doubted by any man who

will ask himself the question, whether one-fifth of all our agricultural production was not, as prices at that time were, represented by a much larger sum than the amount of one-fifth of the contemporaneous loan?

But this is not all—there is another point of view in which the picture is to be seen, where it will disclose fresh advantages enjoyed by the landed interest at the period of our greatest difficulties, not only exclusively, but derived directly—though incidentally, still positively derived—out of the very misfortunes which those difficulties brought upon other interests.

The foreign adventurer came here with a cargo of corn, for which he considered himself amply remunerated by the clear intrinsic sum of 800*l.*, that is to say, for example, 500*l.* for the shipping price at Dantzic, and 300*l.* to cover freight and insurance to London. He demanded, however, and did receive, bank-notes to the amount of 1,000*l.*, which he converted into 800*l.* in gold, and with that gold he returned to his own country. This he did, not because he could not, with even 800*l.* in bank-notes, have purchased colonial produce and English manufactures, which would have made him a richer man when he got back than he would be with his gold, but simply and solely because he knew that he would be prevented, by military force, from introducing those goods into the Continent. Not only, therefore, did the 200*l.* additional money vanish from him in consequence of his returns being confined to gold, but, when he got home, he was forced to give for such goods five times as much in gold as he could have purchased them for, when he was here, in bank-notes.

Now we are to observe, that it was precisely because the foreigner was placed in this situation that the English agriculturist received 1,000*l.* for the like quantity of his corn: let us then see how he was circumstanced in his expenditure of that sum. I appeal again to the recollections of our merchants, whether our warehouses were not, at the time in question, groaning with sugar and coffee, and all manner of our own colonial produce, as well as with foreign tropical productions, remitted as payments to some unfortunate exporters of British manufactures? and, also, whether those manufactures were not held here in immense quantities, for want of their natural markets, and at prices ruinous beyond measure to the makers

and holders of them. Every man who had any acquaintance with our commercial affairs in the last five or six years of the war, knows well that such was the case. Into so depressed a market, therefore, for all such commodities did the English agriculturist go as a purchaser, supplied with funds extravagantly enlarged, not only incidentally while that market happened to be so low, but positively rendered large by the very cause which made it so low.

An idea, and a most mistaken one it is, very generally prevails, that during the high price of gold all commodities were dear; but the mercantile and manufacturing interests knew, but too well, that nothing scarcely was dear at that time, with reference to the cost of production, except agricultural produce, and those other commodities which, if imported, were imported solely for consumption; and also, that the cause of that dearness lay in the expenses of importation and the loss in remitting money to the Continent occasioned by the impediments to exportation. If we set aside the medium of money, whether in paper or in gold, and measure the prices of our manufactures and colonial produce by the quantity of agricultural produce for which they could be exchanged at that time, we shall see, that the degree in which the landed interest revelled, both *in* the distresses and *because* of the distresses of the manufacturing, colonial, and commercial interests—all except the shipping interest—was so great, that it is now a matter worthy of astonishment how the country was able to support the burden of the war and the burden of the land at the same time.

Still I say and repeat, that these are no grounds of complaint or reproach against the landed interest, nor would they be adverted to, except as curious historical and statistical facts, exhibiting the vicissitudes of good and bad fortune to different classes of society, if, when the war was over, and the cause of such derangements had ceased, the fortunate class had been contented with what had passed, and had not refused to loosen their grasp, and let go their hold of the unfortunate classes. The various schemes and expedients to which the landed interest have resorted, or endeavoured to resort, in order to avoid bearing any share of the public burden which the war has left upon the country, render it absolutely necessary that their pretensions to exemption should be sifted to the bottom. Perhaps they have

never comprehended their real position—perhaps, when they do comprehend it, they will relent and be just.

I am, sir, your humble servant,

H. B. T.

---

LETTER V.

*To the Editor of the MORNING CHRONICLE.*

SIR,

*January 25, 1834.*

The working classes, who are the great body of the people, are, because they are the great body, more interested in the establishment of sound principles, upon extensive subjects, than the other, and far less numerous, portion of society can be. The distinction between the two classes, with reference to the several effects upon them of good or bad general systems, is somewhat like that which exists between the extensive productions of the field and the limited productions of the garden with reference to the influence of the weather; the first are openly exposed to the effects of the prevailing season, while the latter may be sheltered in a variety of ways. So long as the faults in the political economy of a great nation are confined to trifling objects, they are like the little indiscretions of diet committed by persons of strong constitution,—they do harm, no doubt, though it passes by unheeded. But when an extensive subject like that of corn, or like that of currency, to which I am about to advert, is wrongly treated, the evil consequences will break out; and then the great body of the people—the working classes—will be the chief sufferers. My friends of the “Society for Promoting National Regeneration” must not think that I am forgetting their cause, while I am only trying an “issue out of Court,” upon which much of their cause depends. They have escaped great peril in the attempts which have been made to debase our currency; but although those attempts have hitherto failed, through an opposition highly creditable to the honour of our country, still we must remember that the project was not rejected upon any disproof of the grounds upon which it was proposed, and that the fact of a former depreciation seems now to be admitted on all sides. If the validity of that admission is to remain an undisputed record, future assaults, made in times of pecuniary pressure, may prove too strong for our virtue; and I shall, therefore, offer in this letter, the suggestion of

some doubts upon the subject, which may, perhaps, be thought worthy of serious consideration.

The proposition in my last letter did not depend upon the hypothesis of depreciation. I was not content there to assume the fact, or even to admit its truth; all I had to prove was, that the landed interest were fully indemnified for the difference between the market price and the Mint price of gold, let the cause of that difference be what it may. I shall now examine the question of depreciation itself.

In order that we may bring the question at issue before us in as plain and succinct a manner as possible, a few matters must be premised, a few definitions settled, and a few admissions agreed upon. But first, I must make a declaration of faith. I am a true disciple of the school of currency, of which Mr. Huskisson may be the leader; \* I swear by the principles of his celebrated work, and I pledge myself to advance no theory, to employ no doctrine, except such as it was the object of his labours to establish. We shall differ only upon facts. The principles of the writers who opposed him in the heat of the controversy I totally reject. It is not, however, for the sake only of making this declaration that I draw attention to that treatise;—I do it chiefly for the advantage of the brevity and distinctness with which I may be able to place in a prominent point of view the proposition I hope to establish, if I lay its foundation upon the details of a work which has long been before the public, and from which the public may be said to have chiefly drawn the opinions upon currency they now universally entertain. Mr. Huskisson's pamphlet was published shortly after the delivery of the Bullion Report of June, 1810. He had been a member of the committee by whom that report was made, and he wrote with the avowed purpose of supporting its doctrines with a sort of supplement of details, such as could not well be introduced into the parliamentary document.

Let us, then, consider what the doctrine of depreciation is, according to these authorities.

Depreciation of a local currency is an effect of which a redundant quantity of circulating medium is the cause. The test of

\* I would here include Mr. Ricardo and Mr. Mushett; they will be sufficient representatives of a code of doctrines which they assisted in advocating with great skill.

the redundancy, and the measure of it, are to be found in the course of mercantile transactions with foreigners.

When a local currency is redundant, it causes the prices of commodities, in the country where it occurs, to be raised above their proper level with relation to other countries.

The general level of prices in the world is determined by the total stock of the precious metals. The proper level in each particular country depends upon the proportionate share of that stock, which it is able to command, by means of its relative power of producing, cheaply and abundantly, commodities which are desirable in other countries.

Although the total stock of the precious metals governs the prices of commodities, so that those prices are always reckoned or expressed in the precious metals; still, that stock may be economized, and, in effect, expanded, either by means of direct barter, as in some cases; or, as in other cases, by trustings and transferable credits, so managed as to be indirectly equivalent to barter—since by such methods of dealings, men are enabled to pass commodities from one to another, to a very great amount, without the intervention of the precious metals. These transferable credits have come in time to assume the form of “bank-notes,” actually personating the very metals themselves, and performing the functions of coins in the country in which they circulate; and their operation upon prices is the same as that of an increase of the stock of the precious metals.

But as bank-notes are always local, if they be anywhere issued in undue quantity, the prices of commodities in the country where they circulate will be raised above their proper level; that is, above the level at which they ought to be in that country, in due relation to the prices in other countries, with reference to its own power of commanding a supply of precious metals, by means of its surplus productions, suitable, in description and price, to the markets of other countries.

A country having such an excess of circulating medium loses its command over the precious metals, for the purposes of commerce, by the same means as it obtains other articles of merchandise—namely, by paying for it an advanced price proportioned to the redundancy of its local currency; and the price so given is the measure of the depreciation.

This is a sufficient exposition of the principle of currency and

of the first cause of depreciation, and it is perfectly consistent with the doctrines of the bullionists. We now come to the practical operations, or secondary causes; and in describing them, the bullionists again shall be my guide.

When the prices of all commodities have been raised in a particular country by a redundant quantity of circulating medium, its markets become attractive to foreigners as sellers, but repulsive to them as buyers; and importers return home with gold instead of goods, because they can purchase no goods in that country at a price for which they will be reimbursed in their own country. If the issuing bank could continue to pay its notes on demand, these importers would continue to derive a most profitable trade; but, as this is impossible, we will at once suppose—what was our own case—that the paper currency is not convertible into coin; and then the two following consequences will shortly ensue:—first, the stock of gold in the market will be sensibly reduced; and next, the stock of those goods which are produced for the export trade will accumulate. In a little time after this the price of gold will have risen so much as to destroy the profits apparently gained on the sale of the foreign goods; and then a third consequence will follow—namely, that there will be a considerable check to importation.

This is a state of things which cannot be permanent. Trade never stagnates long, and some part of such a combination must in time give way. The manner in which the struggle will end, will determine the extent of the depreciation, by fixing the terms on which the foreigner will be willing, once more, to carry on commercial dealings with the country. Either the distress, which the holder of exportable goods begins to feel from the want of a sale, will make him disposed to lower his prices; or, the want of importable goods will make the customer ready to give the foreigner a better price for them than he did before; or, a few goods being imported, gold will be less in demand for returns, and will become cheaper; and thus, the party who is wrong yielding in the contest, the true relative values, computed in the local currency, of imports, of exports, and of gold, will be ascertained; commerce will resume its functions upon an agreed basis, and goods, once more, will go in return for goods, let the ascertained amount of depreciation be what it may. The foreigner cares nothing for the depreciation of your paper, provided you allow him the proper

discount. If you give him five-and-twenty per cent. more than he wants for his goods, he will give you five-and-twenty per cent. for your goods more than he considers them worth. But if you ask him twenty-six per cent. he will leave them, and will buy gold at twenty-five per cent. instead. In this way the value of the local paper currency comes in time to be measured, side by side, with the intrinsic metal currencies of the rest of the world; and the degree of the depreciation is proclaimed in the public market price of gold.

The moving cause of this result may be stated in a very short axiom, which is this—that if you depreciate your currency by an excess of circulating medium, the foreigner will give a preference to your gold over your goods, up to the rate of the depreciation. It is not a preference to gold over paper, for, were it so, he would barter his own goods for gold when they came in; but every merchant sells his goods, first, in the currency of the country he carries them to; and then he considers what he shall buy with that currency to take back with him. This forces him to determine whether he shall buy gold or goods; and the terms upon which he prefers one to the other evinces his estimation of the currency in which he had sold his goods. A mercantile preference can have but one guide, and that is, a comparison between the respective prices of different articles at the place where they are to be bought, with reference to their respective prices at the place where they are to be sold. This is the preference intended in the axiom; and I request the reader's attention to it, because it is the key to the question of depreciation, and we shall have much use for it in the sequel. It is this description of preference which was intended by Mr. Huskisson and all the bullionists.

Before I proceed to give to the foregoing observations that application, for the sake of which they have been made, I shall take a short retrospect of the period during the suspension of cash payments, in order that the extent of the subject matter, as well as the question at issue upon it, may be well understood.

The Order in Council, directing the suspension of cash payments, was issued in February, 1797. No immediate rise, however, in the price of gold succeeded that order; and in 1799, the Bank had so completely recovered itself from the effects of those State measures which had, indeed, alone brought it into difficulty, that they not only then proposed to resume their payments, but



solicited permission to do so. Mr. Pitt, however, conceiving that the country might be called upon to make extraordinary efforts against the enemy, in which a command of the specie might prove useful, resolved to continue the suspension upon political grounds; and it must be acknowledged that the country was willing to leave the management of its circulating medium to the discretion of the Bank. In 1800, the market-price of gold rose about three or four per cent. above the Mint price; but this was mainly caused by the "great scarcity" consequent upon the bad harvest of the previous year, which led to extensive and unusual importations of corn, at very high prices, and requiring extraordinary remittances to foreign countries. In 1801, the exchanges righted themselves again, and little more was thought on the subject till about the beginning of the year 1809. They say that from 1806 till about the close of 1808, the price was 4*l.* the ounce, or about 2½ per cent. above the Mint price; that it then began to rise rapidly, until it became about 15½ per cent. above the standard; and there it continued up to the time of their report. We know that there was, afterwards, a considerable further rise, the excess being at times even above 30 per cent.; but the average, from the close of 1808 to the close of 1814 may be fairly taken at 25 per cent. In the autumn of 1814, the exchanges rose with great rapidity; and notwithstanding the fresh breaking out of the war, which caused a relapse for a short time,\* they recovered so effectually soon after the final peace, that by the middle of 1816 the exchange upon Paris was a quarter per cent. in favour of London. The fresh armaments all over Europe, which the return of Napoleon to France gave occasion to, must have caused a most urgent demand for gold for the supply of the various military chests; and, added to the general dismay of the time, may well account for the relapse in price which occurred in 1815. But the progress which had been made before the end of 1814 in levelling the exchange, followed by the consummation in the middle of 1816, notwithstanding such a powerful interruption, is sufficient to show, that if that interruption had not occurred, the level would, in all probability, have been effected a full year sooner. For these

\* Upon the mere news of Napoleon's escape from Elba the exchanges fell ten per cent. in one day. This could be nothing but mercantile speculation, excited by a recollection of what had been the state of things so recently before.

reasons I divide the term of the suspension into the three following periods:—

The first period embraces about twelve years—viz., from February, 1797, to the close of 1808. During this time the market-price of gold was above the Mint price, on the average rather less than 2 per cent.; and, when all the circumstances of that period are considered, particularly the great occasion which Government had for placing funds in foreign countries, the public will not quarrel much with the Bank for that small excess. Indeed, it never would have been seriously thought of, if it had not been for the great subsequent rise; but the subject is usually argued, as if gold had been exceedingly dear all through the term of the suspension.

The second period in the division is one of six years, from the end of 1808 to the end of 1814, during which time the excess of the market-price over Mint price may be computed on the average, at 25 per cent.

The third period is that from the end of 1814 to the resumption of cash payments, with which I have not any intention of meddling, although I may illustrate my views of the general question by reference to some of its features.

I now return to the discussion of that question, with reference to the price of gold from the close of 1808 to the close of 1814. I should, however, here remark, that the Bullion Report of 1810, and Mr. Huskisson's pamphlet which followed soon after, as well as the works of the other writers alluded to, must be deemed, notwithstanding their earlier dates, to be applicable to the whole of this period; because the members of the Committee and all other bullionists always gave them that subsequent application.

I have now faithfully stated the doctrines of the bullionists, in which I entirely agree, and I have truly related their explanation of the manner in which an excessive issue of paper terminates in a high price of gold, firmly believing that the effect which they predicate will always follow the cause which they deprecate. We have now to apply that explanation to the facts of the period we are about to examine, in order to see whether such a cause had then any existence. Let us then recur to our test. Was the price of gold raised above the Mint price, in consequence of a preference given by foreigners to gold over our goods? In other words, did the foreign merchants at that time, find that the prices of the

goods we produced for exportation, or acquired in the way of our natural trade for exportation, were raised so much above their value abroad, that they thought it more to their interest to sacrifice twenty-five per cent. upon the bank-notes they had received for their imports in purchasing gold, than to lay out those notes in purchasing cottons, hardware, sugar, or coffee? This is a question of fact; and unless it can be answered in the affirmative, the charge of depreciation brought against our currency must fall to the ground, and a verdict of acquittal be entered up; for certainly there is not a single "count" in the indictment, as it has been framed by the authorities I have spoken of, that can be substantiated, if the proof of high prices of goods should fail.

What was the language of advice, and of injunction too, which Mr. Huskisson distinctly addressed to the Bank of England in his treatise, when he meant to give to the proceedings of the directors a practical application of his doctrines? "Reduce your issues," he said to them, "you will thereby lower the prices of our goods, which will then be once more the chief, or even only medium of remittance to foreign countries, as they ought to be, not only to pay for foreign goods, but also for the recovery of the gold, which the redundancy of your notes has driven out of the country. By your excessive issues you have so raised the price of the goods which we ought to export, that the foreigners are compelled to leave them behind and take away the gold." This was the purport of the language of Mr. Huskisson, addressed to the directors of the Bank of England; and such language, added to the whole tenor of the reasoning in his work, as well as to that of the reasoning of all able men, who took the same side of the bullion question that he did, can leave no room to doubt, that proof of a high price of goods, as well as a high price of gold, computed in a local currency, is necessary in order to establish a charge of depreciation against that currency. "Cash suspension" alone is clearly not enough, because, during suspension, the Bank might, from a morbid caution, so stint the circulation as that, for purposes of occasional convenience, a premium in gold should be given for notes; and again, if we should suppose that clipping, melting, and exportation, could really be prevented by a law, an intrinsic metallic currency might be so improvidently extended, that uncoined gold might be considerably above the Mint price in gold standard money, and even although there were no notes in cir-

ulation. It is only by supposing extreme cases of this nature that principles can be tried.

It may be observed, that no statistical tables or accounts have been introduced into these letters. There has been no need for them, because I have founded all my positions upon great leading facts, which are notorious to the public.

The fact I am now about to bring to the recollection of the reader is of this description. I mean the ruinously low prices of our manufactures, and of our colonial productions, under the operation, against England, of the "Continental System," during the six last years of the war. Prices are high or low by comparison; but then it is material to consider what are the proper objects of comparison, according to the purpose of the inquiry. For our present purpose we are to compare the English prices with the contemporaneous foreign prices;\* and in doing so, we need not aim at any great accuracy, because the foreign prices of all those descriptions of goods, which we held in the greatest abundance, were so much above the English prices, that if we were to take them at only half the amount, the excess would still be enough to have given the exporter an enormous profit, over and above what he got in taking gold, even if he could have bought gold with his bank-notes at the Mint price. I mean to assert, that the prices of sugar and coffee, for instance, on the Continent, computed in gold, were four or five times higher than their prices in England, computed in bank-notes. I am speaking of the times of the "Berlin and Milan Decrees," and the British "Orders in Council;" of the times of the "License System," and of the "Blockade System,"—of the times in which the French chemists discovered sugar in beet-root, and a substitute for coffee in chicory; and when the English grazier tried experiments upon fattening oxen with treacle and molasses—of the times when we took possession of the island of Heligoland, in order to form there a depôt of goods to facilitate, if possible, the smuggling of them into the north of Europe; and when the lighter descriptions of British manufactures found their way into Germany through Turkey. It will be remembered that the French decrees declared on one hand, that no vessel should enter a Continental port if she came from England, or even had touched at England. On the

\* No mistake can be greater than that of comparing the prices of those times with subsequent prices.

other hand, our Orders in Council declared that no ship should go to the Continent unless she came from England. Whatever might be the military merit of this mode of retaliation, its commercial effect against ourselves was most pernicious. Our fleets had complete possession of the seas at that time, and they compelled every ship they met to make for a British port. The consequence was, that almost all the merchandise of the world accumulated in our warehouses, where they became impounded, except when some small quantity was released by a French license, for which the merchants at Hamburg or Amsterdam had, perhaps, given Napoleon such a sum as forty or fifty thousand pounds. They must have been strange merchants, according to the bullionists, to have paid so large a sum for liberty to carry a cargo of goods from a dear market to a cheap one. What was the ostensible alternative to the merchant? Literally this—either to buy coffee at 6*d.* a pound in bank-notes, and send it to a place where it would instantly sell at 3*s.* or 4*s.* a pound in gold, or to buy gold with bank-notes at 5*l.* an ounce, and send it to a place where it would be received at 3*l.* 17*s.* 10½*d.* an ounce. A man might as well pretend to deny all Bonaparte's victories, or even that there was such a person, as attempt to deny that such was the state of our intercourse with the Continent during the reign of the decrees. It is too absurd, of course, to say literally and distinctly, that the gold was remitted instead of the coffee, as a preferable mercantile operation; and yet, if it was not so, under some explanation which I am wholly unable to conjecture, what becomes of Mr. Huskisson's advice to the Bank, to draw in a number of their notes in order to reduce the price of coffee to the sum at which it would be a preferable remittance to gold? I have never been able to extract out of all the writings of the bullionists but one description of reasoning which could even seem to approximate to the shadow of an answer to this objection. I will state it, and expose its futility. They begin with showing that all the human laws that ever were made have proved ineffectual in preventing the precious metals finding their way *out* of the country which debases its circulating medium; or *into* the country which contracts its circulating medium, in even a small degree, within the amount which is consistent with the preservation of its intrinsic value. This is perfectly true; and in proof of it, it would be easy to show that the natural tide of the precious metals did really set in strong

upon England through the whole of the time in question. There was not a space on the globe at which we could gain access with some goods, as a valuable consideration, from whence the gold and silver did not spontaneously flow to us; *and there was not a country in the world in which so large a quantity of desirable goods could be obtained, in return for an ounce of gold, as in England.* But the error which those good people have fallen into, is this—they are thinking of the facility of smuggling gold, and forget the difficulty of smuggling goods. The gold, of course, will not come, if the goods cannot go; and that the goods could not go, at the time in question, is sufficiently proved by their current market prices on the different sides of the Channel.\* The impediment was, the resistance of bayonets and cannons; and the efficacy of the impediment is undeniable. I remember well to have heard it frequently said of Bonaparte, at the time when all this was going on, that he was constantly examining the English price current, in order to ascertain whether, and with what degree of success, his decrees were enforced by his own troops, and obeyed by his allies. So long as he saw that gold was dear and coffee was cheap in England, he was satisfied that his "Continental System" worked well. The English could see nothing in those documents but proof that the Bank was shamefully extending the issue of its notes.

It is a most extraordinary thing that the people of England should have so strangely mystified themselves on the subject, as to have imbibed a general impression, that all things were dear during the time that gold was dear; for there never was a greater mistake, and yet no man speaks ten sentences upon the "currency question," without talking of the high "war prices," as applicable to all commodities. Some descriptions of goods were, certainly, exceedingly dear; but then, others were most oppressively cheap; and the characteristic line to be drawn between them will be found to be a very curious one, when we come to examine the distinction with reference to the question at issue. The dear goods were those which we raised or imported, or partly raised and partly imported for consumption only, and of which, so far from having any surplus, we scarcely obtained enough for our own

\* If 60,000 tons of coffee, held here unsaleable at 6*d.* the pound, while coffee was 4*s.* or 5*s.* the pound on the Continent, is not evidence that the impediment was more than all the subtlety of mercantile men could overcome, it is in vain to look for proof of such a fact.

demand. The cheap goods were those which we made at home, or brought from our colonies, in quantities beyond our consumption. The cause of the dearness of the first class lay in the difficulties and consequent charges under which alone the deficient quantities could be procured. The cause of the cheapness of the second class lay in the impediments to our gaining admission for the surplus quantities in the countries of their proper markets. The false idea of universal dearness being thus dispelled, by reference to these facts, I would ask, which of the two classes of goods, according to the above division, is the one whose prices bear most on the currency question? I have a right to receive from every bullionist the answer, that the value of the circulating medium is to be tested by the prices of the exportable commodities, more than by the prices of the importable commodities. The mere fact of the great cheapness of the former specifically contradicts the charge of depreciation; while the dearness of the latter in no way alone implies depreciation. Then arise two other questions:—First, has not the dearness of the importable goods been clearly accounted for, upon the common principles of supply and demand?\* And next, can the cheapness of the exportable goods be accounted for consistently with an assertion, that the currency was depreciated at the same time? There is one more point to be cleared up, and that is in respect of the *quantity* of exportable goods debarred exportation; because it is necessary to consider, whether the quantity was sufficient to have produced a great effect upon the price of gold, under the supposition that the impediment to exportation had been removed. My solution of this problem shall be distinctly adapted to the purpose of the inquiry. I am confident that the stock of goods which we held waiting a foreign market, over and above the quantities of them which we should want to retain for the home consumption, amounted in value† to a sum equal to the whole quantity of gold coin necessary for the ordinary circulation of the country, when the Bank is paying its notes on demand. And in this valuation I do not take the extravagant prices at which, during the prohibitory system on the Continent, the scanty supplies, occasionally let in,

\* The cause of the high price of corn, and other agricultural produce, was fully pointed out in the third letter.

† The value of the coffee alone, at a moderate price, in open market, would have given us upwards of six millions sterling.

under French licenses, were then selling; but only the prices which at those times might have been expected in an ordinary state of commercial intercourse with an enemy's country, such as has been usual in other times of war.

The proposition which I would establish is, that although depreciation must produce a high price of gold, a high price of gold is no proof of depreciation, unless accompanied also by a high price of goods. It is the price of goods which rises first, and the price of gold rises afterwards, only because the price of goods had risen, and the foreigner is therefore willing to give a high price for gold, rather than give a still higher price for goods. A low price of goods—that is, greatly below that for which they will sell abroad—is utterly inconsistent with, and contradictory of, a charge of depreciation; and therefore, if, when the prices of goods are low, the price of gold should happen to be high, we must seek another cause than depreciation for the high price of gold. Never was effect deduced from its cause more clearly, than that both the low price of goods and the high price of gold are deducible from the French decrees and the British Orders in Council; and yet the bullionists so completely abstracted themselves from every existing fact, that they inferred depreciation, at once, from the high price of gold. It is true that they assert that goods were dear, and that the high price of gold did receive the confirmation of a high price of goods. But they took the wrong goods—they took corn and other agricultural produce—they took hemp, timber, barilla—they took the very goods for which we had to give the gold, instead of the goods which ought to have been taken instead of the gold, and in return for which alone we can obtain gold itself. The only goods which can affect a question of currency in any country, are those which it naturally and habitually exports. In France it would be wine; in Russia, tallow; in Virginia, tobacco; in Norway, deals, and in England, calicos, hardware, sugar, and coffee. The price of agricultural produce, *here*, had no more to do with the subject than the price of admission to a theatre at Paris. And yet one of the modes of accounting for the strange misconceptions into which the bullionists fell, notwithstanding the light of their excellent principles which they had for their guide, is, that they assumed a general rise of prices from the dearness of agricultural produce; a fresh proof, by the by, of the mischievous predominance of a land bias upon every question.



Another mode of accounting for the prevalence of the error I have exposed, is the course pursued by the Bank during the bullion controversy, and the line of argument adopted by their literary advocates. These parties entered the field of theoretical discussion, and attempted to overthrow the sound doctrines of Mr. Horner, Mr. Huskisson, Mr. Ricardo, and the rest of the true school; their object was, to establish principles of currency upon which a cash suspension might be defended at all times. If they had applied themselves to the task of proving the inapplicability of those doctrines to the extraordinary facts of the then present times, and had said, "Look at the prices of the British exportable goods, and our immense stocks of them—these are the representatives of our absent coins; with them the coins can be recovered whenever the interruption created by brute force shall cease." If they had said this, the unwelcome answer to them might have been, "Very well, we will keep our eye on those prices, and on those stocks, so long as that interruption lasts; but, remember, that as soon as the interruption is over, your cash suspension is over also; and, therefore, be upon your guard, and take care that when the time comes, these stocks shall really be exchanged for the coins." But the bullionists should not have waited for the Bank to commence this dialogue, they should have given the injunction themselves; and most happy would it have been for this country if they had done so: for then the finest opportunity in the world for retracing a step—false in its nature, but right under the circumstances—would not have been lost. The bullionists should themselves have pointed to the stocks of exportable goods, their immense magnitude, and their miserable prices, compared with their prices in their proper market abroad, and they should have said—"In this we admit an exception to our rule; here is a force in operation which suspends the applicability of our doctrine." Happy, I repeat, it would have been for the country if they had done this, because then, the true cause of the high price of gold being acknowledged, the period of its natural cessation would have been assuredly fixed upon as the period also of the cash suspension. Had that period been so fixed on, and resolutely adhered to—as it would certainly have been if the case had been understood—we should have recovered our gold with increased prices of the goods which we sent out in order to bring the gold back. But the bullionists were thinking of nothing but triumph-

ing with their principles over their antagonists, by whom those principles were most absurdly attacked; and the Bank was caring for nothing but continuing the cash suspension as long as they could; and therefore, not defending themselves from unjustifiable assaults by pleading a justification which was of a *terminable* character.

This letter has been extended much beyond the limits within which I hoped to confine it; but I cannot conclude it without endeavouring to fix on the mind of the readers the proposition I have advanced in the last paragraph, viz.:—that we could have resumed cash payments within a short time after the termination of the Continental system, war or no war, with more ease than at any much later period. The means of acquiring gold are, the possession of such goods to give in return for it, as the parties having the gold are desirous of receiving. The Continent never could be more bare of all tropical productions, and of British manufactures, than it was rendered by the privations which that system inflicted on it. Neither could any other state of commerce whatever give occasion to so large a collection of such goods in this country, as had at the same time, and by operation of the same causes, been then forced into it, and there impounded. The people of a country which has lost its coins, by the high prices of its exportable goods, in consequence of an excessive issue of paper money, can only recover the precious metals by such a contraction of its currency as shall greatly reduce those prices. They must exactly retrace their steps; they must make their markets attractive to buyers, and repulsive to sellers, except the sellers of the precious metals; they must make it profitable to a foreign merchant, who wants the goods of a third country, to bring his gold first to them, and with it to purchase their goods, as the cheapest medium for obtaining from that country the goods he wants. Men who talk so composedly as they do of our alleged depreciation can have no conception of the misery which this country would have had to go through, if we really had lost our gold from that cause. The real fact is, that the prices of all our exportable commodities rose from fifty to a hundred per cent. during the time when the chief part of our gold was spontaneously coming in; and when we might most easily have secured the whole, if the Bank had given only a slight appreciation to our currency at the time. Let us reverse this case, and imagine that, instead of the prices of our goods rising, as I have stated, they had

fallen considerably below what they had been—and they must have done so if they had been depreciation prices—and then we shall have some conception of the distress which must have pervaded this country while it was undergoing such severe discipline. Let us, on the other hand, imagine that the Bank had seized the opportunity I speak of, for preparing speedily for the resumption of cash payments; and, by an effort, which would then have been a very easy one, for the work was almost done to their hands, had consummated that work; and then let us reflect on the number of troubles, and the mass of errors and misconceptions we should have escaped. The question of previous depreciation is not affected by the fault of the Bank in not taking the proper time for replacing the metallic currency. It is enough to prove, that there was a time when it *could have been done*, not only with the facility I have described, but also with the accompaniment of circumstances the very reverse of those which must attend a recovery after depreciation. If any man doubt the fact, that the price of all our exportable commodities was very high in the year 1814, I will refer him to the amusing annual statements which poor Alderman Waithman used to make in the House, for the purpose of showing the liberality, or the folly, or something—but nobody could tell what—of our exporters, in supplying foreigners with our goods so much more cheaply than we used to do. He always pitched upon 1814 as his dear period.

But this extraordinary rise of the prices of our exportable goods at the time referred to, is as little considered in discussions on currency, as their previous low prices; and to what must we attribute such remarkable neglect of so strong a feature of that question? To corn—corn again! Land, land and for ever. The price of corn, which proved nothing, fell, and therefore the prices of our manufactures and colonial produce, which alone affected the question, are to go for nothing; although the first fell only because the expenses of importation were reduced, and the second rose only because foreign ports were opened for their reception.

I cannot tell, sir, whether I have shaken, in any degree, the decision which has been so universally passed upon the currency question; but of this I am sure, that if our currency was depreciated during the last six years of the war, the principles of currency, upon which the charge of depreciation is to be founded, have not yet been propounded to the public.

I defend the Bank up to the end of the war. Their conduct since, till lately, has been full of faults, and full of blunders. Their attempt to infuse gold into the circulation by paying it away in driblets, till they had wasted six millions of their treasure; and, again, their quietly consenting to cash payments, and withdrawing their own small notes, while the country bankers were left at liberty to issue as many as they pleased; the omission of the Bank to insist upon the revival of the whole of our original monetary system, if the part which immediately affected them was to be revived; these, and many more matters, prove that there was a time when the Bank did not understand their business. But they understand it now; they have had the lessons of costly experience, and there is ample reason to be satisfied with their present management.

As to the suspension of cash payments, it might have been justifiable for a short time in 1797, because the Minister had brought the Bank to a stand-still before they were aware of their situation, and some time was necessary for them to recover a proper stock of metals and coin. This being done, the suspension was indefensible, in my opinion, until the continental system came into operation. If, during the operation of that system, we had resolved to keep a metallic currency, our circulating medium must have been contracted\* to a degree which no man at present contemplates. If sixpence in metal could not be attracted into the country for a pound of coffee, which would ensure the holder of it three or four shillings in France or Holland, I do not

\* We must either have given up the use of a bank, and been content to see the price of a fat ox brought down to 10s., or we must have given up the Orders in Council. I consider that our pecuniary difficulty lay in the Orders in Council, and not in the French decrees; and I go so far as to say, that if we had not retaliated, I would not have admitted the decrees to have justified the cash suspension. The stoppage of the *direct* channel of remittance by the enemy was not a sufficient excuse; but when we ourselves stopped all *indirect* and *circuitous* channels, and thereby brought also the American embargo upon us, it is most preposterous to talk coolly of the never-failing efficacy of mercantile expedients; or rather, not even to deem such a state of things worthy of mention, in treatises upon currency, intended for the use of the very times in which such things occurred.

see how a bank could issue a single note more than it could pay in specie at the same moment.

I am, sir, your humble servant,

H. B. T.

POSTSCRIPT.—If any bullionist should condescend to notice this letter, with a view to its refutation, I hope that he will keep close to the point. He must apply his reasoning to the fact—that all exportable articles were, in this country, far cheaper, computed even in Bank notes, than they were in the countries of their proper markets in gold. The reverse of this fact has hitherto been assumed by all the writers who have insisted on the depreciation of our currency. In the works of Mr. Huskisson, Mr. Ricardo, and Mr. Mushet, there is not to be found the slightest trace of any impediment to commerce. Future historians may very fairly endeavour to prove, by arguments drawn from their total silence on the “continental system,” and their constant assumption of free agency in the merchants, that the Berlin and Milan Decrees and the British Orders in Council were fabulous traditions.

I have been desired, since this letter appeared, to re-peruse the Appendix to Mr. Ricardo's pamphlet, which he wrote in answer to an article in the “Edinburgh Review,” upon the previous edition of the pamphlet itself. It is long since I looked into any of these treatises, and I turned with haste to this Appendix, imagining that I should have found something which I had formerly overlooked; but far from it—the Appendix, like all the rest, proceeds wholly on the assumption, that “coffee, sugar, &c.” were cheaper in France than in England. I will give a quotation from the Appendix, as a specimen of remarks and illustrations which might be selected from the writings of the bullionists, sufficient to fill a volume.

“The only proof which we can possess of the relative cheapness of money in two places, is by comparing it with commodities. Commodities measure the value of money in the same manner as money measures the value of commodities. If these commodities will purchase more money in England than in France, we may justly say that money is cheaper in England, and that it is exported to *find* its level, not to *destroy* it. After comparing the value of coffee, sugar, ivory, indigo, and all other exportable commodities, in the two markets, if I persist in sending

money, what further proof can be required of money being actually the cheapest of all these commodities in the English market, in relation to the foreign markets, and, therefore, the most profitable to be exported? What further evidence is necessary of the relative redundancy and cheapness of money between France and England, than that, in France, it will purchase more corn, more indigo, more coffee, more sugar, more of every exportable commodity than in England." I suppose Mr. Ricardo considered everything that could be put into a ship an *exportable* commodity, or he would not have jumbled corn into this latter list; but the reader will remember that I have applied the word "*exportable*" to those commodities which a country produces habitually beyond its consumption, as contradistinguished from what we may denominate its *consumable* commodities. Certain manufactures and colonial produce are our "*exportable*" commodities; and my position is, that so long as we possess them in great abundance beyond our consumption, and the prices of them are very greatly below their prices in other countries, the phenomenon of a high price of gold does not prove the assertion that the currency is depreciated; nor is the coincidence of a high price of corn, which may be the effect of famine, a sufficient corroboration of that assertion. So much for the classification of commodities: but Mr. Ricardo did not attempt to say that the high price of gold proved depreciation, *notwithstanding* the low prices of all our exportable commodities; he assumed that these prices were *higher* here than in France. He imagines the peaceful merchant in his counting-house, with no other weapon than his pen, nor ammunition than his ink, coolly calculating and finding that gold will be a more advantageous remittance to France than coffee or sugar, because, consulting the prices-current, he sees that "money will purchase more coffee and more sugar in France than in England." Now we know that this assumption was not merely untrue, in anything like the ordinary degree in which prices vary, but that it was extravagantly, ridiculously untrue: for that coffee and sugar were 500 or 600 per cent. dearer in France in gold and silver than they were in England in bank-notes, and that for four or five years together. It is quite in vain to say that the depreciation of the currency is proved by such writings as this; and it will be found, that the reasonings of all the bullionists are based upon the same false assumption, accompanied at the same time

with a total want of the discrimination necessary to be made between those commodities, which are properly the *exportable* commodities of the country, and those which it could only produce or import to satisfy its own wants.

If, therefore, I repeat, any bullionist should condescend to notice my exposition of this subject, I hope that he will undertake, this time, to prove that the high price of gold did not require the corroboration of a high price of goods in order to prove that the local currency was depreciated; but that the price of the gold was proof alone, even *notwithstanding* the miserably low prices and the enormous stocks of our exportable commodities.

It is, of course, too late for such diffuse reasoners to fall back upon the truism, which the simple price of the standard metal affords. If the whole question lay in the price of gold, it could have been answered in three words, and there would have been no need of three hundred pages of elaborate argument.

A patient tells his physician that he has a pain in his side; the physician immediately pronounces that the disease is in the liver, and then, with great volubility, describes a variety of symptoms connected with the origin and progress of such a disease, and which symptoms he also assumes the patient to be suffering under. The patient, as soon as he can obtain a hearing, assures the physician he has not one of those secondary symptoms; on the contrary, he has some symptoms directly opposite to those described. "I don't care for that," says the physician; "you have a pain in your side, and that's enough to prove to me that your liver is diseased, whether you have the other symptoms or not." The patient would be very likely to say, "I have no doubt that the man who, in addition to a pain in his side, has all those other symptoms you describe, has a diseased liver, but I shall take other advice before I submit myself to the remedies which you prescribe." The truth is, that if we search an inch beyond the main fact of a high price of gold, we find that all the subordinate facts run counter to the doctrine of depreciation, as its progress and workings have hitherto been expounded.

It is very excellent to furnish the world with sound abstract treatises on currency; but the public have a particular case before them, and they want information expressly upon that case. Under circumstances so extraordinary as not to have their parallel in the

history of human affairs, we agreed, at a particular period, to dispense with a metallic currency, and to adopt a substituted circulating medium. Now what the country wants to know is, whether in that interval of time the substituted currency fairly performed the duties of its absent principal; they want to know whether the prices of goods at that time were unduly raised by an abuse of the substituted currency, in order that they may know whether the difficulties under which they labour now, twenty years afterwards, in consequence of low prices, are attributable to a fall of them from an improper elevation? They do not want to know how much the true level of prices would have been deranged on the side of depression, if, under such circumstances as we were placed in, with nearly the whole world combined in a conspiracy to deprive us of the use of the precious metals, we had resolved to employ a metallic currency—they want a rule for judging, by means of which, setting aside the extraordinary influences on both sides, they may be able to estimate the fitness of the prices, according to the ordinary operation of supply and demand—according to the quantity of the precious metals in existence, and according to the share of those metals to which, upon mercantile principles, we were entitled.

In the quotation I have given from Mr. Ricardo, he says, and says most truly, “The only proof which we can possess of the relative cheapness of money in two places, is by comparing it with commodities in those two places.” Our money at that time was wholly paper, unchecked by gold as its test or regulator; it was, therefore, peculiarly fit to be tested by the prices of commodities in countries where money was subjected to the ordeal of the precious metals.

Now I mean to assert that, from this trial of its value, our currency of that day will come out triumphant. It is a positive fact, that England was the cheapest country in the world during the time when gold was twenty-five per cent. and upwards above the Mint price. I am told, that if I admit the possibility of disturbance by physical force, I deny the theory of money. Then the surgeon who recognises the power of the tourniquet, denies the theory of the circulation of the blood.

---



## LETTER VI.

*To the Editor of the MORNING CHRONICLE.*

SIR,

January 31, 1834.

When men use the proverb, that "honesty is the best policy," they are not contemplating that highest policy of which no reasoning mind ever doubts, but they mean to intimate that those persons who always forbear to seize the opportunities of incidental power for pushing their interest beyond their rights, will generally find, in the end, that they have adopted the most politic, as well as the most honest, course in the management of their worldly affairs. But parties who suffer present evil from the conduct of those who have not philosophy enough to trust to this maxim in doubtful cases, or who want the virtue to act justly without it in all cases, are not bound to defer their rights before the claims of dishonesty until they can make out a clear case of impolicy also, to the satisfaction of those by whom their rights are invaded. I have in several places sufficiently intimated my opinion, that the land interest have greatly misconceived their policy; but whether I bring them round to this opinion or not, I shall equally call upon them to desist from acts of injustice. "The Rights of Industry" do not depend upon my proving, even to impartial minds, that our agriculture would have been in a much more prosperous condition than it is, if there had never been a Corn Bill; much less do they depend upon my making converts of the landed interests themselves to such a view of their case. In "skimming the papers" on a club-table, within these few days, I fell upon a letter from some very angry gentleman of Land, in which he says, in a mighty high tone, "Prove to us that the price of corn will rise, as a consequence of free admission, and we will be very ready to give up our Corn Act." In another place, he says, "that the man must be an incomparable coxcomb who would pretend to predict what the price of corn would be after the repeal of that act," forgetting that the Corn Bill itself was founded upon predictions of this nature. Such an effusion might have been suffered to pass quietly, if we did not know that this gentleman is only an impatient spokesman of the sentiments of his class; and, therefore, whether I venture or not, under the peril of this denunciation, to make the forbidden estimate, I have at least the boldness to tell him, that the price, whatever it would be without a

Corn Act, is all that he or his friends who possess land can, as honest men, demand of those who have none.

It is absolutely necessary to discharge the subject of all the false claims of the landed interest, before either the question of their particular policy, or the question of the general policy of the nation, can be advantageously discussed. I have, in former letters, disposed of those claims which are founded upon burdens created by the long and arduous war which terminated about twenty years ago. The National Debt, I trust, will no more be pleaded by the landed interest as the justification of a Corn Bill, either upon the ground of its magnitude or that of its composition; and it may be hoped that, even in other quarters, the composition of the debt will be thought a little better of than it has been. I now propose to offer a few observations upon the claims which the landed interest found upon their liability to tithes, to poor-rates, &c., and to taxation in general.

Of tithes, it may be enough to say that they existed long before that most abstruse and highly theoretical maxim in political economy, called "protection," was invented by "practical men;" and they have always existed, as a positive charge upon land, unqualified by any right conferred on the owners of land to reimburse themselves from the moneys of the rest of the community; except so far as such a charge may, by the operation of trade, under some circumstances, infuse itself into the prices of the productions of land. If, after one-tenth part of the produce of a field has been taken for the tithe, a law is to provide that the value of the nine other parts shall be increased by one-ninth, the owner of the field pays no tithe at all; and I believe that no man will say that it never was intended that the burden of tithe should be borne by the landowner. A Corn Bill, granted for the purpose of relieving the land from tithes, is a deliberate transfer of a charge from one party, who is liable to pay it, to another, who is under no such liability; and nothing but an increase of population, which has added greatly to the value of the remaining nine parts of the produce of the field, could have enabled the owner of it to execute a device for making the people pay him also for the tenth part, which never was his property.

The poor-laws are of older date than the importation of corn; they existed through a long term of exportation, when the owners of land neither had, nor could have had, any protection upon the

ground of the charges they incurred in supporting their poor. The circumstance of our having passed from the condition of an exporting to that of an importing country, can give them no right to be re-imbursed those charges by the trading part of the community, although it supplies them with the machinery for enforcing such a claim; and, indeed, if we reflect upon the number of idle persons who were supported by the great landowners out of the produce of their estates, before commerce and refinement had altered the habits of society, by converting squires into gentlemen, and boors into artisans, the poor-rates would appear to be little else than a substitute for the former practice, tardily adopted after an interval of great disorder, under which the landowners were the greatest sufferers. There is nothing in the first institution of the poor-law, nor in the early practice under it, upon which the landed interest can found a prescriptive or traditional right, to throw upon the rest of the community—directly or indirectly, by any device or contrivance whatever—the charge they incur in maintaining the surplus part of the population of their respective parishes. The demand of an additional price for the produce of their lands upon the ground of that charge, amounts to a claim for personal exemption; and if we follow out the proposition contained in such a claim, it will be found to run into the most extravagant conclusions.

Suppose the labouring population of an agricultural parish, which had brought all its lands into complete cultivation, to have been at any given time so exactly measured to the work to be performed in it, that none but the sick and infirm should require relief. In a few years this happy adaptation of hands to work would inevitably be deranged by the natural increase of population; unless the portion which constituted the surplus could be absorbed in the various occupations of other parts of the country. The facilities for effecting their migration must depend very much upon the prosperous condition of the manufacturing part of the people; and their ability to support this agricultural surplus would be evinced only by their ability to employ them. But suppose that from some cause of distress—such, for instance, as being forced to pay a high price for corn, while their foreign competitors were able to obtain corn at a low price, the manufacturers were unable to find employment for this agricultural surplus of people in their works, would it not be an extraordinary proceeding to

require them to remit money to the respective parishes of those people for the purpose of supporting them there in idleness? And yet a law which enhances to the manufacturers the price of corn, upon the ground of the poor-rates paid by farmers, amounts to nothing short of such a requisition.

Nor can the manufacturers see any end to such demands, except in ruin to themselves and the farmers too; for, let us imagine that in a parish in Sussex, the work and the work-people had twenty years ago been balanced in a manner just mentioned, and that the lands in it produced at that time for the market, after feeding its inhabitants, a thousand quarters of wheat, which sold at sixty shillings the quarter; but that now the population had become so much increased, that the quantity left for market was only eight hundred quarters, and that the farmers, therefore, demanded seventy-five shillings the quarter. If their demands were acquiesced in upon that ground, the disposable quantity, at the end of the next twenty years, might be only six hundred quarters, and the price must be £5 the quarter; and thus, in process of time, the whole produce of the parish would come to be consumed upon its own lands, were it not that such false systems must explode before these extremities are arrived at, or even very closely approached.

According to the Agricultural Report of last session, there is a considerable extent of land in Sussex which is very expensive in the cultivation, and which yields scarcely three sacks of wheat to the acre. Such land must require the labour of many hands; but yet we are told that there is not sufficient employment, in the several parishes, for their respective populations.

In these places, the case we have been supposing would soon be realised, if the farmers are to throw the burden of their poor upon Birmingham and Manchester; and the owners of such lands would do well to consider, whether they are not manœuvring for the filling of workhouses in their own parishes, which they may find that they must support, instead of factories in the manufacturing districts. But in what light are we to view the significant lamentation poured out over these barren soils by the Committee and their witnesses? Can they possibly mean to intimate that the people of this country are to be fed upon a scale of supply, measured by the produce of land which yields but three sacks of wheat to an acre, in return for expensive cultivation? Can they

really harbour an inclination, to smite the country, as it were, with such a degree of virtual sterility?

The highway-rates are a description of charge which naturally attaches to the superficies of a country. The various roads are in the ratio of that superficies, and the more numerous they are, and the better their condition, the greater is the advantage of those persons who own or occupy the surface of the country over which they pass. But the receipts of tolls form the great fund of the main highways of the kingdom, and from this source lines of communication have been made, by which the value of land, in numerous and extensive districts, has been greatly enhanced. The chief ground upon which the landed interest demand reimbursement of such charges is, that they are not borne by their foreign competitors. If this be so in regard to highways, I can only say that their foreign competitors have the worst of the bargain. If an addition can be made to the price of corn upon the ground of the highway rates, it must be upon the principle that it is a charge which ought not to fall upon land; and how such a principle is to be maintained I cannot conceive.

The county-rates are another grievance complained of; but the occupiers of land, and the dwellers in rural situations, are the parties most interested in the purposes for which those rates are chiefly expended. I can see no ground upon which the landed interest should throw their portion of these expenses upon the other members of the community; but this they will do if the price of corn is artificially raised upon the ground of the county-rates.

But the landed interest do not confine their claim of indemnification to those taxes or rates which attach immediately to their lands; they intimate in no doubtful expressions, that they must be supplied with the means of bearing their share of the general taxation of the country. Heavy duties have, of late years, been imposed on horses, carriages, servants, wine, and other articles of their use and consumption, and they conceive that their liability to these duties constitutes a right in them to require that their incomes shall be proportionably raised. Their incomes are the rents of land, and as rents cannot be increased except the prices of agricultural produce be increased, they have brought themselves to believe that they are entitled to compel the public, by the aid of a law, to pay higher prices for bread and meat, in order that they

may compete, as I suppose, with foreign landlords in keeping horses and carriages, and using other luxuries. It must be admitted that very strange ideas are entertained generally of taxes. They are recognised by every man, as a burden, and yet every man thinks he is ill-used the moment he feels the slightest sensation of the burden on his own shoulders. The common remedy in these days is to call for a repeal; but the landed interest only demand reimbursement. Give us plenty of rent, they say, and we will not complain of taxes.

There is but one construction to be put upon this conduct—it amounts to a plain avowal that the landed interest are, in effect, to pay no taxes. A demand of increased price of corn upon the ground of taxes is a demand of an exemption from taxation. Nothing but an open market for the consumer can enable him to compel the producer to pay his own taxes.

If this country choose, in the midst of all its pecuniary difficulties, to indulge in acts of profuse liberality to particular classes in the country, let it do so with its eyes open, and, at least, let the objects of its generosity confess their obligations. Every sum paid under legal compulsion, for a commodity beyond its natural price in open market, is a positive tax upon the consumer of that commodity, whether it go into the national purse or into a private pocket. We are under the necessity of raising a large revenue, and it has become a matter of great difficulty to fix on subjects through the medium of which the power of the population to bear taxes should be advantageously exerted in the production of the required amount. This power is expended in vain with reference to the national purposes, in the degree in which it is made to exert itself for the purposes of private interest; and when the public collector comes with his demand, he finds that power almost exhausted by the previous demands of private collectors. The tax-paying power is limited of course; but if the whole of it were exerted for the State, the receipts of the revenue would overflow, and relief from the more injurious taxes would be easily granted.

The heavy burden of public taxes under which the country labours, is supposed, by many persons, to constitute the very reason why it should be burdened with private taxes; an idea which is so strange that one hardly knows how to deal with it. The proposition, which is supposed to be conclusive to this purpose, is, that in a country which is so heavily taxed—alluding to general

taxation, not a specific tax, which may be and always is counter-vailed—certain trades—the cultivation of barren land, for instance—cannot be supported, unless the public be compelled to purchase its productions at arbitrary prices. Now, it appears to me, that the true form of the proposition would be, that a country which has already such heavy and necessary burdens upon it, cannot afford, and ought not be expected, to take upon itself other and unnecessary burdens. If we had very few or very light public taxes, then, indeed, we might give way to whims of generosity, and agree to pay taxes for the sake of supporting private individuals in losing trades. But when we hear it often questioned whether it will be possible to keep the revenue up sufficiently to satisfy the public creditor, it is most outrageous to plead such a difficulty as a reason for paying over immense sums, raised upon the people, to parties who are no creditors at all, and who have not a shadow of claim upon the general funds and resources of the country. It is said that these sums are spent in the country—so also, I say, are pensions and sinecures; but a tradesman has only small thanks to the man who lays out in his shop the money he had first taken out of his pocket. The public may rely upon it, that the cause of all our fiscal difficulties lies in the protective system. The people cannot pay public taxes and private taxes too. But the evil does not stop here; because a protected trade is, of course, a losing trade, or it would not want protection; so that the means of paying taxes are crippled into the bargain. Those means must be in profitable and not in losing trades.

The particular amount of taxes which are paid by those parties who are supported in carrying on losing trades by contributions from the rest of the people, forms an insignificant sum compared with the amount which would flow with ease from the country at large if none but profitable trades were pursued. Analyze the farming accounts of that land which yields only three sacks of wheat to an acre, in return for great labour of horse and man, and ascertain how much that land contributes to the State by its own productive powers, after deducting what is first contributed towards its cultivation out of the sources of employments which really are profitable; and then it will be seen in what manner the taxes, which are paid by the thriving part of the people, are intercepted in their way to the National Treasury, and the difficulty we have in raising a sufficient revenue will be understood. I wish, with all

my heart, that the lands of the kingdom were of a quality to yield, by their intrinsic value, the rents out of which the owners are paying their taxes to the State; then, indeed, their contributions would be valuable, because they would be made without impairing the powers of other people to pay their taxes also; then might our agriculture boast of being the "foundation of all our prosperity;" but it is the greatest delusion imaginable to suppose that the expenditure of the higher orders is beneficial to the revenue, or to the interest of the country, if the means of it be not drawn from the sources of real and unfeigning property.

It appears to be perfectly clear that the rights and immunities to which the landed interest lay claim are of a description which cannot be contingent upon any property whatever. There is no intelligible principle upon which the owner of an estate can be held to possess more than that estate. In the earliest and rudest states of society mere accidental pre-occupation was a title to land, which time afterwards sanctioned. In later times, grants from the ruling powers constituted the original right, and the priority of the right to grant claimed by every State, is familiarly shown in the conduct of the European governments respecting the lands in their colonies. The common assent which mankind—taken in their most collective character as possessors of the earth—have given to the appropriation of spots of land to particular individuals, as their exclusive properties, is founded upon the conviction that they would be better supplied with food from the land, through the interested exertions of those individuals, than they would be through the combined efforts of the community in its corporate capacity. The human race were not bound to concur in partial seizures and distributions of the surface of the earth, except under the expectation of universal benefit; and had this expectation been disappointed, we may rest assured, that the system would not have descended to our times within many generations. In the beginning, the quantity of land compared with the number of inhabitants, precluded almost the idea of value, much more the contemplation of a monopoly; and we know, beyond a doubt, that no right of monopoly is contained in the grants of land made by any State. How strange a proposal it would be for settlers in Canada, when they are taking their grants of wilderness at two or three shillings an acre, to desire the insertion of a clause in the grants which should be the foundation of a Corn Bill a thousand



years hence ; in case the population should by that time be such as to require more food than all Canada could then produce ; and when, perhaps, their descendants would be receiving, as annual rents, ten times the amount of the purchase prices, computed at the same relative value of money.

It cannot be pretended that in any case whatever the original grantee acquired with his land a right of taxing his fellow-subjects for his own personal benefit ; the land, and nothing but the land, was granted to him : his successor can have no more.

In the name of the working classes, and in defence of the rights of industry, and in behalf of every man who has no land, I call upon the landed interest to be contented with their estates—is that an unreasonable demand ?

I am, Sir, your humble servant,  
H. B. T.

---

LETTER VII.

*To the Editor of the MORNING CHRONICLE.*

SIR,

*February 12, 1834.*

We are now in condition to consider the “rights” of the Corn Law. The respective “rights” of the conflicting parties—the landed interest, and the trading interest—have been pretty fully discussed. The “rights of industry” are found to consist, in the liberty of the workman to exchange, in their best market, the fruits of his labour, for those necessaries and comforts of life of which he has need. The rights of the landowner consist, in the exclusive proprietary possession of a particular portion of the superficies of our common country, upon which no man may take any part, without first paying to him the sum for which he agrees to exchange it. But it is the very essence of human laws, that all private right should be held subject to limitations for the public good ; and the question therefore is, whether the public good requires that the exercise of either of these rights should be subjected to any description of restraint ? No reason has, as yet, been assigned, or pretended, for imposing any restraint upon the landowner ; the free exercise of his rights are supposed to be perfectly consistent with the general welfare ; and he is left in the unlimited enjoyment of them. But not so the workman ; restraint is imposed on the exercise of his rights, and it is for those who impose

that restraint to show the national necessity for such a measure. There can be no doubt that the original right of a workman to the fruits of his labour is of a character far superior to that of the right which any particular man can have to any particular portion of the earth. The right of the workman is founded in nature, the right of the landowner is conventional.

The restriction which is imposed on the rights of the workmen by the Corn Law has not even the outward show of being intended for the public good; and it is in vain to tell the landowner that the burden of the proof, that it is so intended, lies on him; because we see him, on every occasion, claiming the benefit of it as his peculiar right. It is his own case which he perpetually pleads, and it is upon the merits of the case which he thinks he makes out, that he demands an extra twopence of every poor man for his loaf. Nothing can exceed the indignation or resentment with which thorough-going landlords treat every man who hesitates to admit the justice of their demand; and we occasionally see some of them, of the first rank, travelling to county meetings in splendid equipages to enforce their claim to those twopences. In your paper, sir, of the 6th instant, there is a report of such a meeting in the county of Suffolk, at which a noble lord felt himself entitled to say, that "A cry for an alteration in the Corn Laws proceeded from a base, democratic spirit in the country—that wanted cheap bread for its fellows, no matter what injury the agriculturists sustained." I can assure that noble lord, that I have not, in my sentiments or inclinations, a particle of that democracy which he thinks is the sole enemy of his rental. So far from it, that what remains to me of my animal strength should be exerted, if necessity arose for it, in the defence of his aristocratic privileges and of his proprietary rights. But I would remind him, at the same time, that his indignation is warmed up by feelings of a direct, personal, pecuniary interest; while it does happen, as he must know, that among those who would advocate a greater freedom in the trade of corn are to be numbered many men of great virtue, talents, and attainments; aye, and some, too, of deep interest in landed property. Look at Lord Grenville's protest—was he a base democrat?—As to the affected care of this Suffolk nobleman for the "agriculturists"—it is sad meanness. Why, sir, the Agricultural Report rings, from one end to the other, with evidence of the heartless deprivations of the landlords

upon the capital of the farmers. The agriculturist, my good lord, is in no danger except from his landlord. It is the deduction of the "lion's share" from the gross produce, which impoverishes the farmer; and these lamentations over him are only the growl of the lion while making the division. The trade of farming, as a trade, is invulnerable by competition in an importing country; and if it is not a trade, what is it—is it an office? The sole cause of the farmer's difficulty lies in an ill-conceived, impotent corn law; and in the obstinate confidence with which the owners of their farms have relied on its efficacy in fixing their rents. But, my good lord, you have got your corn law, and you have got your distress too—what do you say to that? If "Democracy" is only to be starved down, and if bread is to be made dear for that purpose, what steps will "Aristocracy" take, when bread is cheap, in spite of all the corn bills it can devise and pass? How low is the country to be brought before the landed interest will admit that their scheme works downwards instead of upwards?

I must not quit this part of the subject without stating, that although the ill-judged words I have been commenting on were uttered by a particular nobleman, I use them only in the most abstract sense, and without attaching to them any idea of an individual person.

It would be trifling with the subject not to consider the landed interest as demanding the exclusion of foreign corn, for the sake of their own private benefit; and, except that they assert that their luxuries and enjoyments are the only alembic through which the industry of the country can be converted into prosperity and wealth, I do not know that they even attempt to state a public ground as the basis of their particular pretensions. If they be right in their views, they have certainly a pleasant duty to perform, and they might, at least, go about it with a little better humour. But has it never occurred to them that they might enlist many recruits into this service, which they so voluntarily undertake to perform alone?—that pensioners and sinecurists might be multiplied, and that the salaries of all placemen might be doubled? It would make no difference to the public whether the taxes which they would have to pay for this purpose, went first through the Exchequer, or went directly into the pockets of the parties, as the bread-tax does; and we may be quite sure that these recruits would not be backward in luxurious expenditure. But perhaps

we ought to admit that the trial is too much for human nature. Few men can argue against a proposition which goes to prove that they benefit their country and become patriots by keeping two carriages instead of one, and by drinking claret instead of port.

In all this, however, the landed interest have only fallen into a most common mistake; they have seen trade and agriculture increase together, and being misled by coincidences, which pride and avarice prevented them from comprehending, they have mistaken the effect for the cause. *We have long passed that point up to which the prosperity of a country is based upon its land.* Our trade has outgrown our agriculture, because it has led to an increase of population which the land can neither profitably employ nor plentifully feed. What it is to have a redundant population the landed interest well know, and the more trade is cramped the more redundant will a given population prove to their cost. I know they think that there is a circle of employment to be found in the HOME TRADE, in which the same internal elements of prosperity may be perpetually revolved and improved—that as mouths increased in number bread would get dearer, rents would rise, expenditure enlarge, home trade flourish, and the power of the people to pay for the bread increase with its price. The particular trades which act as purveyors to the luxuries of the rich cordially believe in this view of national prosperity, and the country shopkeepers, who during the “war prices” felt the influence of them in an unusual expenditure of the farmers’ families, pant for the return of dear bread, and imagine that a price, created by Act of Parliament, is the same thing as a price created by actual circumstances.

Home trade and agriculture may, indeed, run a round of the nature described, while a country is passing from the practice of exporting corn to the practice of exporting manufactures; but then the increase in the price of corn will be a natural effect, partly of an increase in the home demand of corn for the consumption of the export manufacturers, and partly of a proportionate relief from dependence on the more remote foreign markets for the sale of the surplus quantity. When this surplus is absorbed by a general increase of population, and the import trade is kept at its usual amount, by means of payments made with manufactures instead of corn, the two branches of industry may be considered as balanced; but with this advantage to the side of

corn, that it henceforth saves the charges of exportation. But if the increase of population should not comprise a new body of manufacturers, capable of supplying commodities for the foreign market, besides having mouths enough to consume all the home-grown corn; then, not only would the import trade be lost, but the home trade and the agricultural would languish together, and the country would become little else than one great poor-house.

On the other hand, if the additional population consist chiefly of manufacturers, who produce commodities suitable to foreign markets, and the export of those commodities materially exceed in quantity the corn which had formerly been exported in return for the imports—the case of the country is thenceforth entirely changed, and its future prosperity will be based upon trade, and not upon land; and no imaginable measure can be so injurious to land as that which may impede the progress of trade.

It happens very unfortunately that the chief part of this transition in our case took place during the war; because the contemporaneous effects of the war, which was totally unlike all other wars, were so mixed with both the causes and the effects of the transition, that the public have never been able to separate them; and the consequence is, that the most fatal mistakes have been made in the appropriating and consorting of causes and effects relative to the events of that period. It was about the time when the improvements in machinery and steam-power were making their greatest strides, that the then vain-glorious, military France thought proper to despise trade, and to deride us as a “nation of shopkeepers;” and this affected contempt for trade, accompanied by a positive neglect of it, when added to the impediments to the progress of trade, which war of almost any description, still more a war of a revolutionary character, must have interposed on the Continent, gave to us the possession, as it were, of a patent for manufactures against all the world. The “nation of shopkeepers” had the undisturbed enjoyment of this patent for full fifteen years; and until Napoleon, who at last saw the effects of the folly of the French, had recourse to his continental system, which he ushered in with the well-known declaration, that he wanted only “ships, colonies, and commerce.” These two quaint expressions were, perhaps, of more portentous import to the affairs of man than any other words that ever were uttered on the authority of man. They designate respectively

two eras of most extraordinary consequences; and although most men still look back upon them with astonishment, and with a vague consciousness that they were of a wonderful character, still no one attempts to consider seriously or distinctly what that character was.

The first era was marked by the most extraordinary advances in opulence that ever occurred in any country. The trade of the world, taken as a whole, was, no doubt, lessened by the war; but we had nearly all of it; and as the causes by which we obtained such an enormous share were of a nature to make it also a monopoly of trade, the profits of it were extremely large. Here then arose, at one and the same time, two very powerful causes of increased consumption of agricultural produce, *and both decidedly of a temporary nature*—the one wholly so, the other so in a great degree. The first was the war, bringing with it a lavish use of such produce in the military and naval services; the second was an entirely new demand for such produce, by reason of the extraordinary start which, partly in consequence of the war, and partly in consequence of the *freshness of the inventions referred to*, our manufacturing industry then took of all the world.

The enormous profits which these circumstances threw into the hands of the landed interest, and the effect of these profits in swelling the gross amount of the national debt, have been pointed out in a former letter; but the means which the contemporaneous increase of general commerce afforded to the country for bearing the burdens which were then brought upon it by the war, and by the extravagant prices of agricultural produce, were not then taken into consideration—either as an explanation of the past, or as a lesson—and a powerful lesson it furnishes—for the future. That commerce was supported chiefly by profits drawn from foreigners for exported articles, which, for the reasons before-mentioned, we were then able to produce at less than what had been the previous cost, either to them or to ourselves: and this very power, *upon the remnant of which alone we now subsist*, was, happily, in its greatest vigour in the hour of our greatest need. But, besides this, our “national shopkeeping” propensities—so long as we were left to indulge in them without the interference of rivals, and had also, as was then the case, the whole ocean almost to ourselves—led us into a very extensive and lucrative traffic in foreign commodities. Nearly all the colonies of Europe were at

the same time in our actual possession; and so great was our command over foreigners, for prices which should cover all charges, that we shipped to the colonies even the high-priced corn of England.

Through the whole of this period the landed interest believed, and they still believe, that *their* great profits constituted the national prosperity, which then enabled the country to furnish the loans as they were wanted—although they spent all their money themselves as fast as they got it—and also to supply the sums raised in the current year by taxes, although the public was all the while paying to them, in extraordinary and un-earned profits, four times as much as the taxes they contributed.

These are some of the grievous mistakes which the landed interest—blinded, as I am justified in saying, by pride and cupidity—committed in those days, and which, unfortunately, they have never rectified since. And the fearful problem, affecting the salvation of the country, which remains to be solved is, whether they will discover and correct their errors in good time—and there is not much time to be lost—or will obdurately wait till facts past question will dispel the mist from their eyes, and they wake, as it were, from a delusive dream, only to survey and to lament, in useless penitence, the mischiefs they shall have brought on themselves and all around them.

I have in this letter only broken ground on the policy of the Corn Laws; and my inclination is to follow out, to their legitimate conclusions, the points of that subject which have been barely propounded. But your columns, sir, can afford me but little space during the sitting of Parliament; and it happens, too, that my own avocations press upon me at the same time. Delay, also, is rendered of less importance by a late ministerial declaration. Nevertheless, I shall not lose sight of the subject—my feelings upon it will not suffer me to do so—and I may, perhaps, seek a future opportunity of impressing upon the landed interest the great and important truth, that they never did, nor ever will, experience prosperity by any other means than the secondary effects of our foreign commerce.

I am, sir, your humble servant,

H. B. T.

CONCLUSION.—It is manifest that the landed interest have

mistaken the means and sources of their prosperity. At the end of nearly twenty years of trial of their own nostrum, accompanied by an immense reduction of taxes—in the second year of abundant harvests—with a protection, amounting to a total prohibition of foreign corn, and at a time when other interests are, at least, without immediate cause of complaint, the distress of agriculture is such that it is proclaimed from the Throne and reiterated in both Houses of Parliament. The landed interest have either aimed at more than is attainable, or, in their impatience, they have sought their object by wrong methods. I believe the error to be of the latter description. A country like this cannot be isolated from the rest of the world; it cannot take an arbitrary level at its own choosing: it has never done so; and the condition, aimed at by the corn law since the peace, is totally new in practice. A country requiring foreign markets for its surplus industry, to the great extent that England does, can no more assume a station inconsistent with the relations of commerce than it can create a peculiar atmosphere for itself. In the case of the precious metals we have seen how vain it is to attempt a fictitious local standard—it is only not quite so difficult to fix an artificial local price for corn. Commerce is the unrelenting rectifier of either error; and the only difference in the operation is, that in the one case the correction is rapid and palpable, and in the other it is slow and lingering, and not readily perceptible to common observation. The foreign price and the British price have a natural tendency to assimilation, whether direct mixture be permitted or not. The influence of the foreign price is felt through the medium of the exports; it comes back upon the British price in the form of low returns for those exports. The only question is, at what level shall they meet? The landed interest are manœuvring for the lowest level that can be apprehended in any case. Their plan depresses the price abroad, and the home price must be drawn downwards the more. If they would take courage and consent at once to direct mixture they would elevate the foreign price, and thereby arrest the downward progress of their own prices.

Those of the landed interest who are not so besotted as to despise foreign trade, seek to extricate themselves from the dilemma of their position by professing unlimited confidence in the superior faculties of British industry, and the greater energies



of the British workman. I beg them to follow out this view of the question. Suppose it to be true, as they say, that one Manchester factory-man is equal to two foreigners, are those superior powers their property or his? Have they a right to make him carry double weight for their emolument? Are we to treat a superior breed of men as we would treat a superior breed of horses? But are not the labourers in agriculture of the same breed? We know they are; and it is also known, that the farmer as well as the manufacturer obtains a greater produce from a given quantity of bone and muscle in England, than in any foreign country whatever.

But the landed interest are afraid that we shall become dependant upon foreign countries for food. Let them, I say again, follow out also *this* proposition; to what conclusion does it lead them? Simply this, and no other—that the population must be kept down by starvation. This is treating the high-bred Manchester workman rather worse than the high-bred horse. However severely the horse may be *matched* by his unfeeling master, he is sure to have all the invigoration that the most heartening food can give him. But suppose it to be the policy of the nation to check the increase of the people by the dearness of their food—would that be a reason for giving the additional part of the price to the producers? Most certainly not. The instrument used for the purpose should be an excise tax, the produce of which should increase the public revenue for the general benefit.

And yet, notwithstanding the strength of my case, I will agree to a compromise. The whole difficulty of the subject lies in a misappropriation of the soil of the country—caused, in the first instance, by the high war prices, and imprudently kept up since the war, under the fallacious promises of the corn laws. We have lately purchased *Negro* emancipation—let us now make a similar, and a far easier, effort to purchase *Corn* emancipation. If about a million acres of our strong arable lands were laid down in (or for) grass, the quantity of corn withdrawn from the market would be such, that the foreign supply would not be able to distress the good lands. The scheme of our agriculture is absolutely defective from the want of a greater breadth of inferior grass land: the graziers, notwithstanding the richness of their pastures, and the high price of meat, complain much of low profit, from the want of lean stock at reasonable prices.

The outline of the plan is—to impose a duty of 10s. the quarter on every species of corn; to be reduced by 1s. a year for five successive years, until it settled at 5s. the quarter. The produce of this duty might be a fund to be applied in bounties to those landowners who should lay land down to grass, under covenants not to break it up again within twenty years, without returning the bounty and the interest upon it. There might also be given to the parishes in which this conversion of land took place, and in proportion to the quantity converted, some of the money to assist a part of their labourers to emigrate, if they should be disposed to do so.

That there is no way out of our difficulty, except by giving up the arable cultivation of a large breadth of our worst land, I am most confident. The only question is—whether the consummation shall be brought about in a sure and beneficial manner, by a legislative measure, or left to the slow operation of distress. The corn farmers are like trees too closely planted—none flourish until a sufficient number of the weakest have died off. The measure I suggest is like that of the woodman, who thins them out at an early state of their growth.

I propose the same duty upon oats, barley, &c., as upon wheat, because a greater encouragement to the *spring* corns would lead to a more wholesome and more ameliorating system of husbandry. I am not at all afraid of the difficulty of the details for the working of the measure I have here suggested.

27th February, 1834.

H. B. T.

These letters attracted the attention of, amongst others, Sir Benjamin Hawes, who thought not only that they bore internal evidence of being the compositions of Mr. Hume, but that they displayed such an amount of sound political economy, combined with a practical acquaintance, equally large, with all the details of trade and commerce, that he was the only person who could have written them. To Sir Benjamin Hawes it was entirely owing that these letters were republished; for no sooner had Mr. Hume admitted that he was the

author, than he urged the reprinting of them in the form of a pamphlet.

It was not without difficulty that Mr. Hume was persuaded to commit them a second time to the press. He thought few persons would read them except in the columns of a newspaper. The publication, however, was most successful, and a second edition was speedily called for.

In the early and more moderate days of the Anti-Corn Law League, the energetic directors of its movements published copious extracts from those letters in the form of a tract, which they circulated through the country we might literally say by the ton.

## CHAPTER V.

**ALTERATION IN THE LAWS RELATING TO SILK—MR. DEACON HUME VISITS THE PRINCIPAL SEATS OF MANUFACTURE—POLITICAL OPINIONS—EVIDENCE BEFORE A SELECT COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS—MR. HUSKISSON—MANCHESTER CHAMBER OF COMMERCE—MR. DEACON HUME'S STATEMENTS RESPECTING SNUGGLING CANVASSED IN PARLIAMENT BY THE EARL OF DERBY.**

“It is to the increasing wealth of the manufacturing population and the progress of industry, and not to artificial regulations for creating high prices, that this country must look, not only for relief from her burthens, but for the power of making fresh exertions, whenever her situation may demand them. It is not in the power of any artificial measures to give that real relief to agriculture, or to any other mode of occupation, which can only flow from the increasing activity and increasing industry of the people.”—HUSKISSON.

It has been correctly observed, that “the manufacture of silk is singularly characteristic of the industry of France and England, showing the addiction of the one to luxury, of the other to utility. Of all the views which can be taken of this subject, this is the most interesting and the grandest. Profit and loss may captivate the merchant's mind; the financier, the statesman, may consider labour as a mine of national wealth, and some ministers will hold it to be a source of taxation; but philosophy, which comprises these and every other view, which presides over them all, will never be satisfied by any inquiry which is not at once

the most minute and the most comprehensive. Industry should be turned every side; it ought to be considered by men of every vocation: its most enlarged and noble properties relate to the intellectual history of human beings. This is the aspect by which it will unite at once the views of the merchant, of the statesman, and of the minister; for in tracing up their respective idols to a common origin, they will find that the only source of private profit, of public wealth, the only taxable commodity, is mind. Philosophy, too, not only directs the present researches, and the future prospects of men, it is the great preserver of all that we have acquired, and embalms the memory of all that we know. The art which has deposited its principles in the archives of philosophy will never perish."

Though silk goods have been made in England from the time of Edward III., it is only within the last thirty years that the silk manufacture can be said to have been firmly established in this country. Its progress was long impeded by a system of duties and restrictions intended to benefit the manufacturer. "That useful competition," said Mr. Huskisson, in 1824, "which gives life to invention, which fosters ingenuity, and, in manufacturing concerns, promotes a desire to produce the article in the most economical form, has been extinguished. The system of prohibitory duties has had the effect, to the shame of England be it spoken, of leaving us far behind our neighbours in this branch of industry. We have witnessed that chilling and benumbing effect which is always sure to be felt when

no genius is called into action, and when we are rendered indifferent to exertion by the indolent security of a prohibitory system. If the same system had been continued with respect to cotton manufacture, it would at this moment be as subordinate in amount to the woollen as it is junior in its introduction into this country." But such a state of things was not to be for ever. In the year 1824, the system underwent an important change. Mr. Deacon Hume was much engaged at this period in the preparation of legislative measures relating to the silk trade. He drew the bill, by which the system of prohibiting the importation of foreign manufactured goods was prospectively repealed, and a scale of duties adopted, under which such goods might be imported. The duty of *5s. 6d.* a pound upon raw silk, and *14s. 8d.* upon thrown silk, was reduced; on the former to *3d.*, on the latter to *7s. 6d.* a pound.\* He also framed the table of duties for the Act of 1826. Had he been able to follow his own convictions entirely, instead of those of his superiors in office, the measures referred to would, in some degree, have been different, and the duties would have been further decreased.

During the years 1830 and 1831, the subject again engaged the attention of Parliament, and at the close of the latter, Mr. Hume undertook, at the desire of the Government, a tour of observation through some of the principal seats of manufacture, which he thus notices in a letter to a friend.

\* These rates were afterwards further reduced—that on raw silk to *1d.*, and that on thrown silk to *3s. 6d.* a pound.

“I have just been rehearsing an air cushion, which is to bear my person some long journeys through the manufacturing districts. On Monday I set off, making Birmingham my first point. You will easily conceive that I have much to do in preparing for such a tour, as well as in leaving matters behind me in as good a state as I can. The object is, not only to acquire, for present use, as much knowledge as may be had of the state of manufactures, but also, if possible, to lay the foundation for obtaining such knowledge at all times.

“The silk and glove trades are, like all others, in bad plight; the cause is the corn law. Manchester is not, comparatively, in a bad state. As to amendment, ‘things must be worse before they are better.’ When they will be better depends upon how bad they must be before the landed interest discover that they are going upon a wrong tack, and literally working against themselves.

“I some time ago read the article which is to surprise the present Lord Londonderry with the news, that his brother and Mr. Canning were identified. I shall be glad to see the answer. Mr. George Villiers is in Paris, and one of a joint commission discussing the commercial relations of the two countries. I despatched to him yesterday three sheets of *notions*, which I hope may be useful to him.”

Mr. Hume proceeded from Birmingham to Coventry, Manchester, Salford, Stockport, Glasgow, and some other places engaged in the silk manufacture, including the district of Spitalfields. During this tour, which

occupied him nearly six weeks, he wrote some interesting letters to Mrs. Hume connected with the subject of his mission.

Silk in fact was an article to which, not unnaturally, he very frequently referred when he found himself at the head of his family circle, consisting of young ladies. Sometimes he would indulge in a disquisition upon this topic, and its extensive bearings, and would provoke a laugh, of which he was fond, by remarking, as he concluded, "And all this about *ladies' dresses*." Or, in a somewhat graver mood, he would say, "You may smile, but you have little conception of the breadth of this subject, and of the anxiety which this single article of your dress occasions the Government of this country." A manufacture, he might have added, which was so much valued by Roman ladies, and so much satirized by the Latin poets, because it had the double advantage, as they deemed it—for the days of hoops and crinoline were not yet—of covering the body, and yet of showing the form; a manufacture which, it has been also said, though it was unknown in England at the beginning of the thirteenth century, has long since descended from the highest to the lowest rank of society, and is now to be found in almost every shape, even in the wardrobe of the peasant.

Though in politics Mr. Deacon Hume was a Whig, yet he was not addicted to party: and would sometimes maintain that he was of no party. He thought for himself. But though he took no active share in its conflicts, it will not be supposed that he was an uninterested



spectator of political events. He was, of course, in favour of the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts. As a member of the Church of England, he maintained without fear of the Pope, the Christian duty of granting the claims of the Roman Catholics. He contended for it, as was natural to him, upon the ground of right. So far was he from regarding the Act of 1829 as an inroad upon the constitution, like Dr. Arnold, he viewed it "as a fulfilment of it:" that is to say, "if by the Constitution be meant a system for the Government of the Commonwealth upon the principles of liberty and justice." He was a reformer in the true sense of the word. And herein he differed from Mr. Huskisson, who, as he stated in the outset of his speech on the East Retford Disfranchisement Bill, had "a settled aversion to every system of what is called Parliamentary reforms," and who only voted for the disfranchisement of that borough, and to give two representatives to Birmingham, upon the principle maintained by Burke, that "early reforms are amicable arrangements with a friendly power; late reforms, capitulations with a conquered enemy;" and because the rejection of the proposal would "pave the way for a measure so fatal in its consequences as a general Parliamentary reform." Mr. Deacon Hume, while he entirely agreed with Mr. Huskisson in the vote which he gave upon the East Retford question, with bolder views, and greater foresight, contended that so far from its being fatal, a general measure of Parliamentary reform was to be desired; that it might not only be granted with perfect security,

but that it would be in itself a source of safety. He consequently hailed the Reform Act of 1831 with much satisfaction.

The following extracts from letters written about this time to a friend, chiefly with reference to import duties, currency, and reform, will be read with interest. The treaty with Brazil, alluded to in the first, he speaks of elsewhere, as a "substantive treaty, but smelling strongly of the Portuguese connection."

"Board of Trade, 2nd December, 1829.

"I send you an extract from, and a comment upon, the Brazil Treaty. Have you read Mr. Western's letter? \* I have been expecting that the tactics of the landed interest, would lead them to currency. It is the most plausible cry they can set up, to divert attention from the cheapness of corn abroad. I mean to look, more narrowly than I have yet done, into the arguments of the letter, and to be prepared with some answer to them; for I consider the production as a feeler, put out in good time, preparatory to the battle which must before long be fought."

"16th November, 1830.

"It would be many years before India could increase the growth of sugar to the extent of the produce of the West Indies; two cwts. of which is equal in strength to those of the Indian. But if India were now growing ten times our consumption, it would be at a very great price, by reason of the freight. Sugar is now brought from India at what is called *dead weight*. The general cargoes are light goods; and the ships being very large, they require a considerable quantity of heavy goods to stow in the bottom. To the extent of this room, as dead weight, the sugar is carried for a very low freight. Whenever this quantity should be materially exceeded, the freight would rise enormously; for then, ships must be sent out in ballast to bring the sugar, which is the case *now*, to the West Indies, and I leave you to conceive what the cost would be in the one case compared with the other."

\* M.P. for Essex, afterwards Lord Western.

“16th November.

“I had fully intended to call upon you to-morrow about two, and perhaps I may still be able to do so. But, ‘whereas doubts have arisen,’ in consequence of Mr. Herries having appointed me to be with him nearly at that time. We are up to our eyes in colonial intercourse. The deed is done in America, as you see, and we must come out immediately with our measures, which are to determine the footing upon which the trade is to be carried on.”

“Board of Trade, 6th January, 1830.

“I have lately had upon my hands a great deal of business in my own private affairs, and we have been far from idle at the Board of Trade. The consequence is, that I have not *done* ‘Corn.’ Another cause of postponement is, that I have been *doing* ‘Bullion;’ and that in a way, as it appears to me, to introduce corn the better. I am intent upon giving in my entire paper before the session. But you are to understand that I am professing (that is, to Lord A., for I have said nothing about it to Mr. T., who ‘writes himself’), to lay before him, in a condensed form, all the lucubrations which have fallen still-born before his predecessors.

“I long to know your ideas, again, on political matters. We seem quieter, but I believe that it is only in expectation of satisfactory measures. If disappointment come, the storm will only be the more violent. I am told that the old party is reckoning upon forcing their way in again. Personally, I have no objection; neither would I object to their system, if I thought it manageable. But my firm belief is, that the resistance of popular wishes, which would be the basis of their measures, must lead to revolution.”

“My visit to the manufacturing districts took place in an era full of extraneous difficulties, and yet trade made, by its own energies, a good head against them. It will have a new and vigorous spring before long, just in time to give éclat to the reform, unless the torch be set to that train of continental combustibles which has its source and origin in France. No man’s opinion, in these days, is worth anything, except it be hypothetically given with reference to the possibility of great and un-governable events. Cholera, French Revolution, Belgium, Poland, Reform, Brazil, Mexico, &c., &c.: all working against the trade

of this country. And yet the people employed in the factories have all along been earning a fair livelihood. Our difficulties are with the unemployed: it is therefore that we want more work, and to obtain it we must take care. I am satisfied as to our power to consume an enormous quantity beyond our growth. Such a fact answers the arguments of the agriculturists by fixing upon them a grievous responsibility. As to the Reform Bill, I do not expect that you will give up your old notions until a few elections have proved to you, that good Houses of Commons can be formed under its provisions. I think the aristocracy, as a body, is well taken care of. They must, some of them, behave a little better—but I do not see any harm in that. How wretchedly have the ultras managed their case! Give me a definition of wisdom in the conduct of our affairs, and try by the test of it, the intellect of the ultra lord. If mischief should ever ensue, it will be the fruit of their conduct, and not the necessary consequence of the reform.”

“*Russell Square, 19th October, 1831.*”

“My former letter was an acknowledgment of yours and not an answer to it. I thank you for ‘going off’ on the subject of the bill. You remind me that you are an irreclaimable anti-reformer. This saves observations in detail, and such discussions must generalize as much as possible. For many years I have, almost intuitively, applied a touchstone to all public questions, which leads one, as I think, to the most useful consideration of them. I ask myself, what is the line of the working, that is, the natural tendency of the matter at issue? A sound answer to this question gives the policy of the proceedings upon it. The Duke thought that the true policy lay in unbending resistance. I believe no one doubts now that a very little yielding on his part would have satisfied the subject for a considerable period. The Lords, much worse than the Duke, because after experience, dismiss the bill with insult; and what is the consequence? Only that every man is now a reformer of some sort. Looking at what I believe to be the ‘tendency,’ I see nothing but evil in delay. I fear that the *terms of to-day* will never be mended by those of *to-morrow*. In some cases *time* works for you; in some it works against you. The Tories ought to have taken the country at its word. They are now off the bargain, and, when they come to treat again, will have

no reason to complain if the price be raised instead of being reduced. The House of Commons would never have objected to the Lords making some amendments, and the people were in humour to admit that they were entitled to a voice in the framing of the law—but a total rejection, an actual spurning of a four months' hard work of the Commons—is a course of proceeding which, I fear, will never be forgotten. I look to ultimate consequences. It was not necessary for the Lords to give proof of their power, and it was unwise to select an opportunity for doing so which must raise the revolutionary question in millions of minds—whether it be not a dangerous power, and one necessary to be curbed? The Lords have said in plain terms, that the people never were represented and never shall be. Must not this make a question between the Lords and the people, which may only be settled by a trial of strength?

What I fear is this.—Ministers will modify the Bill to save the credit of the Tories, in case they should be disposed to give way. The “efficiency,” however, being preserved, it will be lost again, and ministers will go out. Now I will suppose that tranquillity is preserved; but the new minister will be unable to get on with the present Parliament, and a new election follows. Then comes the tug of war. The next House of Commons will be far worse than the present, and away goes the new administration. Whigs, with a still stronger infusion of liberals, will come in, and a fierce political struggle between the two houses will ensue. The radicals will be encouraged—the moderates disgusted, and a bill, ten times worse than the present, will be passed, just in time to save a revolution.

The conduct of the press is a part of the tendency; and therefore scolding is useless. I do not see how Lord Grey can do other than stand or fall by his measure, and if so, he must either have resigned or made the declaration he did.

Early in the year 1832 another motion was made in the House of Commons upon the subject of silk. And on the 1st of March a select committee was appointed to “examine into the state of the silk trade, and to inquire what effects have been produced by the changes

in the law relating to it since the year 1824: and whether any, and what legislative measures, compatible with the general interest of the country, may be advisable, in order to promote it, or to check smuggling in silk manufactures: and to report their observations thereupon to the House.\*

Mr. Deacon Hume, was the first witness called. He was informed that his attendance was required in order that the committee might learn from him the changes which had taken place in the laws relating to silk, and also to supply certain Custom House accounts which he would be able to furnish. He then proceeded to state that he had been employed in 1824 in preparing the Act of Parliament of that year, that he drew the bill, and had framed the tables of duties on the Act of 1826. That the intention of the Act of 1824 was to substitute a protecting duty of 30 per cent. in lieu of total prohibition. Two years had been given before the Act came into operation, during which period "the trade" became of opinion that an *ad valorem* duty would be ineffectual. They suggested rates of duty by weight; and that they should be computed so as to afford thirty per cent., as nearly as such rates would admit, and it was upon that principle, and in consequence of the

\* The committee consisted of Earl Grosvenor, Mr. H. L. Bulwer, Mr. Poulett Thomson, Sir Robert Peel, Mr. Alderman Venables, Mr. Courtenay, Mr. G. Bankes, Mr. Hume, Mr. Alexander Baring, Sir H. Parnell, Mr. Frankland Lewis, Mr. Fowell Buxton, Sir M. Stewart, Mr. Strutt, Mr. Heywood, Mr. Stewart Mackenzie, Mr. E. Stewart, Mr. Shield, Lord Dudley Stuart, Mr. A. Sandford, Mr. James Morrison.

change of opinion in the trade, that the tables of 1826 were prepared, before importation commenced. The table of 1829 was not framed like the former. There was a modification; twenty-five per cent. was adopted in some cases, and even more than thirty per cent. in others. But, excepting one article, he was of opinion that the table of 1829 compared with 1826, increased rather than reduced the protection. Upon being asked, whether, since the modification was applied to different qualities of goods, the duty was intended to be more or less than 30 per cent. on an average, he replied, that he did not feel the application of an average; since the duty on one article did not average with the duty on another, for each paid of itself. The rate in 1829 was meant to give 25 per cent. on plain goods. The officers were allowed, at their sole option, to take an *ad valorem* duty instead of the rate; but there was no instance in which they had a right to demand more than 30 per cent., if they required the goods to be entered at value. In 1826 there was no choice; there were some goods that could not be rated, but there was no choice except in instances of millinery, or things of that sort. In 1829 there were alterations in the rating of many of the articles, and in some there was none. The plain silk which had been 15*s.* a lb., was reduced to 11*s.* the lb.; 15*s.* was understood to be 30 per cent. in the former case, but in the latter, 11*s.* was understood to give only 25 per cent.; then there came the figured satin goods; they were reduced, but still they were meant to give 30 per cent.; others were left at the

original duties with the knowledge that they gave more than 30 per cent. So that in fact, there were three divisions of silk goods; some, where the principle of 30 per cent. was adhered to, others, where it was taken at 25 per cent., which is a reduction, and others for which certain duties were assessed amounting to more than 30 per cent. But these last were not alterations. Though he drew both the schedules of 1826 and 1829, his instructions were very different upon each occasion. In 1826, 30 per cent. was to be strictly adhered to. In 1829 it was agreed that there should be no universal rule. It was in fact a matter of discussion during the entire period that he was engaged in drawing up the tables. In the first case there was a universal rule, in the other there was constant discussion without a fixed rule. He was of opinion that the table of 1829 practically increased the protection as compared with that of 1826, except on one article. Upon being asked if in the table of 1829 the duty was fixed at the minimum cost of smuggling? Mr. Humé replied, that such was the intention of the Government of that day: it was believed that the articles on which they left the higher duties unreduced were less likely to be exposed to smuggling than those on which they had reduced the duties. The silk trade thought a great deal more than 30 per cent. necessary. There might be various opinions as to the stopping of smuggling, but he believed that when the temptation was great it was very difficult to put an end to it. In 1826 he had entertained a hope upon the subject as to the 30 per



cent., that it could be collected; but smuggling, like everything else, had been lowered] in price. The protecting duty of 30 per cent. did not operate in the way the Government anticipated. It was imposed to prevent smuggling; but smuggling went on. So far as smuggling was concerned, prohibition was more effectual than a protecting duty. He thought the smuggling of an article that cannot be legally possessed within the country at all, might be more effectually guarded against than that of one which is admissible, however high the duty; a more rigid rule might be adopted, and the severity of the law be applied with greater decision, so as to make it more effectual. French manufactured goods, however, were less distinguishable, he believed, than formerly, and if that were the case, the success of detection would of course be lessened. Though smuggling had, he believed, increased of late years, it had been by means of packages of various assortments; from all the information he had been able to obtain, his opinion was, that plain silks by themselves were not much smuggled. Smuggling in the sense in which it is understood to be important, occurred chiefly, he understood, in inferior gauzes. That 25 per cent. might not lead to occasional smuggling of plain silks, by themselves, he did not mean to deny. It was a near race between smuggling and regular entry, and the mixture of some high-dutied gauzes would decide the question in favour of smuggling. He had been asked whether he considered that there was a disposition generally in the trade, supposing they

had the option, to pay five per cent. more on the goods to the revenue than they would save themselves to that amount by smuggling? He thought that they would: the regular importer could give his order, and could have it executed immediately; he knew when his goods would arrive: and he must also allow something for a man's wishing to comply with the laws of his country. These considerations put together were probably sufficient to induce men rather to give, say 25 per cent., in duty for goods than to smuggle them at 20. It might be possible always to keep the duty rather above the cost of smuggling, but he was not prepared to say that 25 per cent., or any other percentage would be the proper sum. He wished to be understood as speaking from the impression which his mind had received in consequence of those inquiries which, in his situation, it was his duty to be perpetually making. The price of smuggling was variously stated, and whatever it was then it might become lower.

As to the question whether the change in the law had had the effect of stimulating exportation, it had removed the impediment from inferior articles; the result of which was, that the fine Italian silks were made into superior goods for the use of this country, and that the East India silks were made into inferior articles which suit the export trade. The law, he considered, had done good; the home silk being dearer by reason of the duty on foreign silk: the exporter required the drawback for the one as well as for the other. It was beneficial to the consumer or worker

of fine silk in this country. There were no parties to whom the drawback was injurious, unless it was to the throwsters of Italian raw silk. He did not conceive that any fine silk goods whatever were exported; there was no export, or very little, of goods made from the Italian thrown silk, or from British thrown silk of a similar quality. The duty was a direct evil to those who work up the description of thrown silks liable to it; the drawback was an indirect alleviation of it, and was a direct benefit to those who work up a different description of thrown silks for exportation. With the duty continued, the drawback, he thought, must work beneficially upon the whole trade.

Such, though much abridged, yet in his own words, was Mr. Hume's evidence. The change from total prohibition to moderated protection, little as it might avail in preventing smuggling, was nevertheless an important step in a right direction. The Act of 1824, which substituted a protecting duty of 30 per cent. in lieu of total prohibition, will accordingly be remembered. And though it fell short of Mr. Hume's convictions as to what ought to have been done, even at that time, he never regretted that he had so large a share in what was effected. As is well known, it produced the utmost disquietude amongst the majority of manufacturers, who contended that they could not possibly meet the competition which it was destined to produce. That their mills would be worthless, and that both the employed and the employer would be ruined. No terms were deemed too harsh or severe to be applied

to Mr. Huskisson, who was also subjected to the heaviest obloquy from his opponents in Parliament. Upon one occasion, he said, "I have been assailed and distressed by appeals to my feelings, calling upon me to commune with my conscience and my God, and to say whether I am under no visitation of compunction and remorse. That man must have a heart of stone who can witness without sympathy and pain the distress which now exists among our manufacturers. I hope I am not wanting in the duties and feelings of a man. I have also a duty to perform as a minister, to trace the causes of the present calamities, and to prevent, if possible, their recurrence."\*

Who the true philanthropists really were, was soon made manifest; and, also, who were the false prophets. The improvement was gradual, and it was permanent. The poor rates were *not* burdened. We *were* able to compete with foreigners.

In the ten years preceding 1824, the quantity of raw and thrown silk used by our manufacturers amounted to 18,823,117 lbs., being an average of 1,882,311 lbs. per annum; that in the ten years immediately following the change of system, the quantity used was 36,780,009 lbs., or 3,678,001 lbs. per annum, being an increase over the average of the former period of 95 per cent.; and that, in the sixteen years ending with 1849, the consumption was 66,376,645 lbs., or 4,148,540 lbs. per annum, being an increase of 120

\* Sir Robert Peel, it may be remembered, applied these words to his own case in the year 1846.

per cent. upon the quantity used under the restrictive system.

“Notwithstanding the great increase in the quantity of silk employed in our looms, the quantity of thrown silk imported has not at all augmented during the last sixty; but, on the contrary, has sensibly diminished. The spur of competition has driven forward the manufacture in both its branches. Improved machinery has been introduced into our throwing-mills, the effect of which has been to lessen most materially the cost of the process; and, by the adoption and improvement of the machinery of Jacquard, our weavers are now enabled to produce fancy goods, the quality of which is, with few exceptions of little importance, fully equal, and, as regards some sorts, superior to the quality of goods made in France, although the cost of production is not yet reduced to the level of that country.”\*

Previous to the year 1824, the silk manufacture was substantially limited to two places. Soon after, to adopt the words of Mr. Hume, “While Spitalfields and Coventry were protesting that without assistance against foreigners, they could carry on their trade no longer, Manchester quietly stepped in and took it out of their hands.”† Not only did the silk trade extend itself to Manchester, but it established itself at Norwich, Paisley, Macclesfield, Derby, Leigh, Sudbury, and other places. Subsequent to this period, owing to foreign compe-

\* Porter's “Progress of the Nation.”

† An Essay by Mr. Deacon Hume on the Corn Laws, in the fourth number of the “British and Foreign Review.”

tition, and to improved processes of manufacture in this country, the price of the article has been greatly reduced; so that the use of silk, which was formerly entirely confined to the higher classes, has been extended to every class of the community. The trade is not subject to so many fluctuations, and the employment of those who are engaged in the manufacture is not liable to so many alterations.

The Manchester Chamber of Commerce, and the manufacturers of that town, viewed the subject in a different light to that in which it presented itself to the generality of the English of like occupation. Resolutions of approval were passed in the year 1825 by the above-mentioned Chamber, and in 1839 it again expressed its opinion in the following terms:—"That this meeting regards the present as the proper occasion for reiterating its adherence to the opinion so often declared by this Chamber, that the prosperity, peace, and happiness of the people of this and other nations can be alone promoted by the adoption of those just principles of trade, which shall secure to all the right of a free interchange of their respective productions; and this meeting, on behalf of the great community whose interests it represents, feels especially called upon to declare its disapprobation of all those restrictive laws which, whether intended for the protection of the manufacturing or agricultural classes, must, in so far as they are operative, be injurious to the rest of the nation, unjust to the world at large, and in direct hostility to the beneficent designs of Providence."

The Select Committee of 1832, having sat fifty-two days and examined nearly ninety witnesses, whose evidence, when printed, occupied 1,050 folio pages, expressed their regret to the House, on the 2nd of August, that they were unable to make any general or full report on the several matters submitted to their consideration; but the various interests involved, and the extent of the subjects brought before them, as well as the great number of witnesses they had to examine, and the knowledge that many others still remained to be examined, compelled them, at so late a period of the session, only to lay the evidence before the House.

Mr. Deacon Hume's most mature testimony upon the subject of protective duties with reference to the silk trade, was given before a Parliamentary Committee in the year 1840. He had then retired from public life, and with the experience of fifty years passed in the Custom House and the Board of Trade, he gave evidence as a private person, and without the reserve which must often attach to an official position. The Report, which contains his evidence on the import duties, will be more completely brought before the notice of the reader in a future page. The portion, and it is short, which refers to the silk trade, may be more usefully introduced here, and with little abridgment.

*The Chairman.\**—The Committee are anxious to know your opinion of the effect of protecting duties, and how far they ought to be continued or might be removed with reference to the existing commerce of the country.

*Mr. Deacon Hume.*—I think it might be desirable to classify

\* Joseph Hume, Esq., M.P.

goods with reference to degrees of protection, and the degrees of importance of that protection to the public or to individuals. With regard to the effect on the commerce of the country, I should say, that in a general and national view, the effect of removing the protecting duties must be very beneficial; at the same time, some partial interests must be sufferers under the change.

Then is it your opinion, that generally speaking, all protective duties should be removed, and that it would be the consideration which of them might be exceptions only to that rule?—I conceive that no general measure could be more beneficial to the country than a removal of all protections, prohibitions, and restrictions. I cannot conceive that a country exporting forty millions' worth of its industry in the year can effectually and beneficially for any length of time protect any partial interest whatever. If the protection is effectual, it can only be so in consequence of the prosperity of the country arising from other means; but if once the country should cease to be prosperous, in consequence of being unable to find markets abroad for this enormous amount of exportation, then the parties making those goods that had before been exported would apply themselves to the manufacture of the protected articles, and thus bring them down to their own level very quickly. Spitalfields was invaded by Manchester before it was by Lyons. During the late war, and for a number of years, while the cotton trade was entirely or nearly our own, there was little attempt to make silk goods in our provincial manufacturing towns, and Spitalfields had the trade nearly to itself. But the first distresses of Spitalfields, after the war closed, arose from home competition, and not from the importation of foreign goods.

Then one effect of every protecting duty is to direct labour to that particular branch, which the natural state of the commerce of the country does not allow of?—The first tendency is certainly such, and it is not counteracted so long as other trades which have no protection are still flourishing, and therefore are content with their success.

But you are aware that in Spitalfields there have been for a long time great alternations of prosperity and distress: do you consider that this distress was produced in either case by the foreign manufacturers, or by the home manufacturers in Manchester or elsewhere?—During the period of total prohibition, and before Man-



chester adopted the manufacture, the periods of distress must have arisen from changes of demand in a confined market. I do not conceive that the quantity smuggled in at that time could have had any real effect upon the trade. High forced prices, subject to caprice of fashion, must always keep a trade in peril of reverses.

Then what do you mean by stating that Spitalfields was invaded by Manchester?—Manchester devoted itself to the manufacture of silk goods as soon as the cotton trade began to fail them in some degree, and the profits of the manufacturers in Spitalfields were reduced. There was an interval of very considerable distress in the cotton manufacture between the high prices of the late war and the settling down of the trade to its own level, and then Manchester began to think of the silk trade.

*Mr. Villiers.*—The people of Spitalfields had as much interest in being protected against Manchester as against Lyons?—Certainly.

And the principle of protecting them is the same in both cases?—Yes: and you cannot support the manufacture of Spitalfields in its former state, unless you protect them against home competition as well as foreign.

The purpose of protecting is, to support an existing interest that cannot support itself?—Yes: it is of no use unless the trade is naturally a losing trade.

And it cannot support itself when the community can get the article cheaper elsewhere?—Certainly not, if the protection is wanted.

Then it is always at the expense of the consumer that the protection is imposed?—I think that is manifest.

You have always considered it to have that effect?—I have always considered that the increase of price, in consequence of protection, amounted to a tax. If I am made to pay 1s. 6d. by law for an article which, in the absence of that law, I could buy for a shilling; I consider the sixpence a tax, and I pay it with regret, because it does not go to the revenue of the country; and therefore, I do not, in return, share the benefit of that payment as a contribution to the revenue. I must be taxed a second time for the State.

*The Chairman.*—Then it is your opinion that every protection of a commodity operates as a tax to the community at large?—Decidedly.

*Mr. Villiers.*—And, further, as a misdirection of capital and labour?—Yes: it is tempting parties to embark in a trade by fictitious support, which, in the end, may prove a fallacious one. I have often wondered how any rulers could consent to incur the responsibility of such a policy.

*The Chairman.*—Do not all such protective duties and monopolies occasion very considerable fluctuations in that particular branch, from time to time?—I think that every trade which is thrown out of its natural course by protection, is more subject to fluctuations than those which are left to their natural operation.

*Mr. Tuffnell.*—Then you cannot conceive any circumstances under which a protective duty can confer a permanent and general benefit upon the community?—I think not. While it operates in favour of the party intended to be protected, it is a tax upon the community, and there is always the risk of its not being able to support itself by its own natural strength; and the protection may some day fail of keeping it up. The real question at issue is, do we propose to serve the nation, or to serve particular individuals?

*The Chairman.*—Does not every protection in some degree lessen the efforts of the party protected, to meet his competitors in the market?—In my opinion, from all I have noticed and heard, it has, in a most peculiar degree, that operation upon the human mind. It is rather before my own positive recollection; but in conversations long ago, with older men, in the woollen trade, I have learnt, that at the time of Mr. Pitt's commercial treaty with France, the great import which came upon us was the French broad-cloths. Previous to that, our own ordinary cloths were entirely protected by the prohibition of the other. They were of an uniform and very inferior character. In the first instance, the French cloths had a very great sale in this country; the habit was always to order a coat of French cloth, and no tailor thought of making out a bill without putting the words "coat of French cloth:" and my informant assured me that that habit of so charging lasted many years after there was scarcely a piece of French cloth brought into the country. The manufacturers of this country, feeling the stimulus of a competition, soon set themselves seriously to work to see whether they could not make cloth as good as the French, and the result has been that, up to a certain point, short of some very exquisite productions, such as are

hardly ever required, the English make cloths better for the price than the French do, and consequently they have retained the trade to themselves.

Do they continue to export to a very great extent?—They export to a great extent, and the degree to which they export into markets where the French can meet them without any advantage of protection from the laws of this country is evidence that they have completely attained perfection in their trade.

Are you able to state to what degree the effects of that competition took place in the silk trade after Mr. Huskisson admitted silks at reduced duties?—The immediate effect was very similar to that in the case of the broad-cloths. Within two or three years, to the best of my recollection, the importations of the raw silk into this country were more than doubled, which is tolerable evidence of the increase of the manufacture.

*Mr. Chapman.*—Did that circumstance arise from the fashion of wearing silk coming into general use at that particular period?—I think it did; but that was brought on by the greater cheapness and excellence of the commodity. It also led to the adoption of improved machinery in this country, and particularly in the business of throwing silk.

In the month of June, in the year 1846, in which the corn laws were repealed, Lord Dalhousie, following in the wake of that course of commercial legislation which had been commenced twenty years before, introduced, on the part of the Government, a measure entitled the Customs' Duties Bill. In doing so, he stated that the Government did not propose the measure as one which departed altogether and at once from protection. They desired to remove from articles of *food* all duties whatsoever; while upon articles which were not of first necessity, but which still entered largely into the consumption of our population, they were desirous of reducing duties, as far as consideration of revenue

would permit. Referring to the article of silk, he remarked that the duty was said to be 30 per cent. universally; but that, in point of fact, it ranged from that to about 250 per cent. The Government therefore proposed to put a fixed duty of 15 per cent., from which they expected an increase of importation, to the prevention of illicit trade, and a great increase of revenue. This gave rise to a debate, which, on the 23rd of June, turned very considerably upon a statement purporting to have been given in the evidence of Mr. Deacon Hume on the silk trade in the year 1832. Lord Stanley,\* in opposing the motion, said that "a very high authority, Mr. Deacon Hume, had told them in 1832, that unless they imposed a higher duty than 25l. per cent., *ad valorem*, they need not be apprehensive of smuggling."

The Earl of Dalhousie, assuming that Lord Stanley's statement was correct, replied, that when his noble friend said, on the authority of Mr. Deacon Hume, that a duty of 25 per cent. would meet the case of the smuggler, of course he could not venture to impugn so high an authority, as applied to former times. But it was no longer the case. It was as notorious as the sun in the heavens, that there was no article whatever of foreign produce which could not, for an insurance of 20 per cent., be guaranteed to be delivered in London on the most respectable references to the best bankers."

Lord Stanley "was obliged to his noble friend for the reference he had just made, because it led him to state

\* Now Earl of Derby.

how Mr. Deacon Hume went on with his argument. He admitted all that the noble lord had said: but Mr. Hume went on to say, that the risk of loss on the part of the smuggler was so much greater, that it was always worth the while of the merchant to pay 25 per cent. to the Government rather than 20 per cent. to the smuggler, so that if the duties were reduced to 25 per cent. the revenue would reap nearly the whole of the benefit. That was the continuation of the argument of Mr. Deacon Hume."

Earl Fitzwilliam said he thought "Mr. Deacon Hume could never have said anything so extravagant as that the same amount of percentage would put down the smuggler in every kind of trade—in light and easily concealed goods, as in heavy and bulky articles."

Before the debate closed, Lord Stanley added, "that since the Earl of Dalhousie had spoken, he had referred to the evidence of Mr. Deacon Hume, and he found that he had fixed an average of 25 to 30 per cent. as the amount of duty which might fairly be imposed without the risk of encouraging smuggling. In 1832 Mr. Deacon Hume gave his opinion on the subject of silk, and he stated that as the maximum for protection and the minimum for smuggling. Therefore, so far as Mr. Deacon Hume might be considered as an authority, there was no ground for the reduction of the duty, which, according to his calculation, should be from 30 to 35 per cent."

Without saying that there is no foundation for what

Lord Stanley asserted, it is perfectly clear that had he read the evidence which he consulted more carefully, he would not have hazarded without reserve the statement which he did; and that greater care would have enabled him to see that so far from asserting that unless a higher duty than 35 per cent., *ad valorem*, was imposed, they need not be apprehensive of smuggling, Mr. Hume expressly says, "It was hoped by the Government, in 1825, that 30 per cent. would be the minimum of smuggling." Again, that "while 30 per cent. was imposed smuggling took place, though the alterations were made to prevent it." Again, that "there may be various opinions as to stopping smuggling; but he believed when the temptation was great, it was very difficult to put an end to it." And lastly, though he conceives "it may be possible" to keep the duty "rather above the cost of smuggling," he emphatically adds, "but I am not prepared to say that 25 per cent., or any other percentage, would be the proper sum. The price of smuggling is variously stated, and whatever it is now, it may become lower."

Sir John Bowring was examined after Mr. Deacon Hume in the year 1832. He expressed a decided opinion that a protecting duty of 20 per cent. would destroy a considerable portion of the smuggling trade; that anything beyond 20 per cent. would infallibly cause it to go on. "I consider," he added, "protection to be wholly illusory. I think the silk manufacture of this country would ultimately be increased, by the abolition of it, to an enormous degree. I apply to the

manufacture of silk that which applies to every other. So far as my experience goes, wherever ignorance and inferiority have remained unprotected, intelligence and superiority have taken their place."

Had the life of Mr. Hume been spared three years beyond its allotted term, he would have seen, in the year 1845, the duties on the importation of silk wholly repealed; and a considerable abatement effected in the rates of duty upon foreign goods, in the year after. The day when the remaining impediment to the progress of the silk manufacture, the protecting duty of 15 per cent. upon foreign productions shall be removed, cannot, assuredly, be very remote.

## CHAPTER VI.

EDUCATION—THE POLITICAL ECONOMY CLUB—AGRICULTURE—  
CURRENCY—POLITICS.

A FRIEND to education in every way—to schools, libraries, and mechanics' institutions, Mr. Deacon Hume was associated with the earliest advocates of popular instruction, and sympathised strongly with the establishment by Lord Brougham and others, of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge. Upon retiring from public life, he aided when he resided at Reigate, both by his influence and by his purse, the benevolent efforts of a gentleman,\* whose zeal for the moral and intellectual improvement of his neighbours has been as untiring as it has been beneficial.

With politicians, as such, even during his residence in town, Mr. Hume associated but little. The society in which he had most interest, was that of political economists. In the year 1821, he assisted Mr. Thomas Tooke, F.R.S., who contributed largely to the formation of the Statistical Society, in establishing the Political

\* Thomas Martin, Esq., Fellow of the English College of Surgeons.



Economy Club. Through a long series of years, we believe, he was never absent from its meetings, which were held on the first Thursdays of the months of December, February, April, May, June, and July, at the Freemasons' Tavern, until the year 1852,\* where the members, after the manner of Englishmen, dined together, and a lengthened discussion ensued. At these *réunions* he met Professors Senior and Macculloch, Mr. Jones Loyd, now Lord Overstone, Mr. Ricardo, Mr. Villiers, Sir H. Parnell, Colonel Torrens, Sir John Bowring, Mr. Macgregor, and many others. For a long period, while most of the members were contending for a fixed duty on foreign corn, Mr. Hume was strenuously advocating the absence of any duty. Mr. Cobden, never a member of this club, was present upon one occasion, or the reader would not have to thank

\* This Club is still flourishing. Its meetings, since 1852, have been held at the Thatched House Tavern, St. James's. The following is a list of its members for the year 1857 :—Lord Ashburton, W. J. Blake, Esq.; Sir G. W. Bramwell, E. P. Cameron, Esq.; Edwin Chadwick, Esq.; Sir William Clay, Bart.; W. Coulson, Esq.; J. W. Cowell, Esq.; G. J. Graham, Esq.; Thomas Hankey, Esq., M.P.; Sir B. Hawes, K.C.B.; J. G. Hubbard, Esq.; Kirkman Hodgson, Esq., the Right Hon. R. Lowe, M.P.; the Right Hon. Holt Mackenzie; Herman Merivale, Esq.; John S. Mill, Esq.; W. Newmarch, Esq.; G. W. Norman, Esq.; Lord Overstone; Samson Ricardo, Esq., M.P.; J. L. Ricardo, Esq., M.P.; the Right Hon. Sir John Romilly, W. N. Senior, Esq.; Lord Belper, W. T. Thornton, Esq.; T. Tooke, Esq., F.R.S.; his Excellency M. Van de Weyer; the Right Hon. C. P. Villiers, M.P.; H. Warburton, Esq.; W. W. Whitmore, Esq., M.P.; W. A. Wilkinson, Esq.; J. E. Cairnes, Esq.; Rowland Hill, Esq.; Earl Granville, the Earl of Clarendon, the Archbishop of Dublin, Earl Grey, the Marquis of Lansdowne, Lord Monteagle, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Charles Neate, Esq., M.P. The last eight are honorary members.

him for the following very characteristic and graphic sketch :—

“ I remember hearing Mr. Deacon Hume speak at the ‘ Political Economy Club’ in favour of the total repeal of the corn laws ; and when his chief opponent was Mr. Macculloch, the author of the ‘ Commercial Dictionary.’ There was a general opposition to his views among the company present, who seemed to delight in trying to mystify a simple matter and to puzzle one another. But I was charmed at the boldness with which that meek-looking man contended for the full measure of truth and justice. ‘ Gentlemen landowners,’ said he, ‘ you have your landed estates, they are secured to you by law, you may fence them round and exclude all intruders, why are not you content with the possession of your property, why do you attempt to invade the property of the labourer by interfering with his right to exchange the produce of his own toil for the corn of other lands?’ ”

The establishment of this club, which we believe approached nearly enough to Dr. Johnson’s definition,† was productive of considerable service. The information which was imparted, and the collision of kindred minds, resulted in the gradual advancement of political science, and in the multiplication of its disciples. Indeed there is nothing more certain in the modern history of finance, than that it is upon the conclusions deduced by legislators from the received doctrines of some of the above-mentioned individuals, and a few

\* An assembly of good fellows, meeting under certain conditions.

others, that the important changes made of late years in our commercial system, have been founded. Mr. Tooke, the author of the "History of Prices,"\* was also the author of the petition presented by the London merchants in favour of free-trade in 1820; a remarkable document, every principle of which has since been made the groundwork of legislation. There was no economist of the time with whom Mr. Hume was more constantly associated. Dissimilar in many respects, both were distinguished for patience and intrepidity in the pursuit after truth, as well as for the promotion of it, by their most zealous and active example.†

The following fragment of a sketch of the character and policy of a distinguished statesman is worthy of being preserved. It was written about the year 1829.

"MR. CANNING.—During a term of many years, and while the country was placed in situations of great difficulty and peril—not less by the open assaults of foreign enemies, than by the efforts of traitors and internal foes,—while Jacobinism raged, and that party, which, professing liberal policy and assuming the character of constitutional opponents of ministers, had acquired considerable influence over the public mind, allowed itself to be allied with the leaders of Jacobinism, George Canning was the most distinguished defender of everything that was aristocratical, legitimate, and established, in Church and State. He held no terms with the enemies of the constitution; and he refused to distinguish from such enemies, those who in struggling only, as it may be hoped, for ministerial office and power, had failed so to distinguish *themselves*.

\* In six volumes, 8vo.

† Mr. Tooke died at his residence in Spring Gardens, on the 26th of February, 1858, in the 85th year of his age. To the last moment of his existence, it is said, there was no interval during which the clearness and serenity of mind, so remarkable in him, was beclouded.

"Through the whole of this era he exposed himself to the charge of ultra-toryism, and extreme illiberality of political sentiments; patricians crowded round him and applauded him; plebeians hated and assailed him; the country was in danger of a preponderance of the popular interest; and, pending such danger, he saw it to be policy to conceal from public knowledge how much the genuine sentiments of his mind, and the feelings of his heart, were opposed to tyranny—how much he believed that the true interest of a great and noble aristocracy was to be promoted by the granting of free institutions to the people.

"At length the happy day arrived when he could safely suffer his sentiments to be known, and, safely too, indulge the hope of seeing them prevail. He then, turning to the great and noble, addressed them in the language of congratulation for their triumph, and of warning against a renewal of similar scenes of danger. He showed to them those errors of government, which had led the minds of the people into a belief that the rulers and the ruled were in a necessary state of natural enmity. He taught them by the example of France, that when oppression had excited *one* people to rebellion, the anarchy which arose from it was dangerous to their freer neighbours; and he expected to be supported by them in his laudable endeavours to render the world secure by making it happy.

"But he knew not his auditors. His mind, candid as it was penetrating, judged rightly of human nature in the mass, but erred in its estimate of the sophisticated few. He had propounded doctrines which were unpalatable; and, in the hour of trial, he found himself among enemies, when he believed himself to be surrounded by friends.

"There was a hero, to the strength of whose arm he owed the glorious opportunity of benefiting his species which he thought he had attained. He looked to that hero, that he should have joined him in a cause, which, by making his victories serviceable to all mankind, should carry down his fame with double splendour to the latest posterity. But, alas! he found that hero enlisted against him, in the ranks of low and little minds; he had to learn the mortifying lesson, that genius in the field had no necessary connection with the more valuable quality of philosophy in the closet."

It is obvious from the foregoing that Mr. Hume

thought highly of Mr. Canning, and still more so of his policy. In one of his letters, he remarks, "It is impossible to overrate the benefits to mankind which might result from the proper comprehension of a scheme of policy, the honest practice of which must reverse many of the events which are in progress. It is in vain for any man, now, to write essays, the produce of his own mind, although they should inculcate doctrine in perfect unison with the sentiments of the great master. Such productions would want the stamp of authority." . . . Yet "a superficial consideration of the changes in men since his death, might lead to a conclusion adverse, rather than favourable, to his character."

The limits of this volume will not admit of the insertion of the article contributed by Mr. Hume, in the year 1836, to the third number of the *British and Foreign Review*, on the Corn Laws. We will, however, present the reader with the following passages:—

"ENGLAND INDUSTRIALLY AFTER THE WAR.—At the termination of the war, the industrial peculiarity of England among the nations was that of a decided bias to manufacturing and commercial pursuits; while the industry of the Continent had a marked inclination to agriculture. Such, indeed, was the character of the long war by which the peace had been preceded, that it could not fail to produce these distinguished peculiarities. A most serious question was then propounded to the statesman—whether he should take the actual position of the country and the world, as the basis of his future measures,—or whether he should undertake to create for himself a totally new basis, in order that he might have a foundation for measures, schemed in his own brain, but for which the existing order of things was wholly unfitted.

"The war had given us the command of the seas, and thus our

commercial superiority was established ; and it so happened that, during the war, the chief of those inventions in machinery, and of those discoveries in science which have wrought revolutions in the condition of man, were either brought by us first into use, or were by us matured. England had, by these means, acquired a greater command over the precious metals than any other nation ; because she was thereby enabled to send forth into the general markets of the world, a greater value in her manufactures, in proportion to the quantity of human labour expended upon them, than any other nation could send. This power is the foundation of all riches ; and since it exerts itself in commanding the larger share of the quantity of precious metals extant in the world, it has a direct tendency to raise the rents of land in the country by which it is possessed. Whatever excuses may be made for the errors of our statesmen, in not seeing at once, and in the happy moment for a right decision, that they had then in their hands, self-created, a foundation for their future proceedings, far preferable to anything which their vain and fanciful devices could produce, no excuse can now be offered for that wilful blindness, which sees no remedy for the evils of its own making, except in their noxious repetition.

“ In the progress of the twenty years, which have been gradually exposing the grand mistake made at the close of the war, the landed interest, from time to time, condescended to argue a little with those enlightened men, who endeavoured to make them comprehend the error of their course ; but now, when to every rational mind the question has received a complete decision, they content themselves with sneering at, or crying down, every man who considerately points out to them those sure and undeviating laws of human affairs, which never fail in the end to punish all nations which despise their dictates. To say the least of it, this is a disgraceful course ; and when we think on the names of the many prominent men among us—their stations in life, and their necessary education—who seek to confound the voice of wisdom, by calling up the vociferous cheers of thoughtless auditoriums, with the words ‘ philosophers ’ and ‘ theorists, ’ used as cant terms, irreverently intended to imply ignorance and absurdity in men of science—we blush for the upper ranks of our national society.

“ Two-and-twenty years of habitual hostility had rendered the business of war a sort of second nature to the country, by calling

into exercise many branches of industry peculiar to that state, and which could not but fall into disuse upon the return of peace. The transition was necessarily a painful one even under the most skilful management; and the 'revulsion,' as it was then termed, by which that transition was attended was, to a great extent, unavoidable and irremediable, except by the lapse of time. But though many of the employments of war were inapplicable to a state of peace, there was nothing in the respective natures of agriculture and commerce to render one, more than the other, unfit to meet the change. They were both equally peaceful employments: why, then, while we were suffering under unavoidable change in some matters, while change *in se* constituted our peculiar grievance of the time,—why, at that time, seek to make forcible change in other matters, and thus aggravate the evil which was of a temporary nature, by superadding another evil, to which no definite limit can be assigned?

"As if war of some kind with the rest of the world was our natural element, we no sooner terminated that of the sword with one country, that we declared the war of commerce with all the rest. And by what peculiar class amongst us, we ask, was this deed done?—By the landed interest, is the answer. And who, now, at the end of these twenty years, is the complaining party?—Again, we answer, the landed interest."

"AGRICULTURAL PROGRESS.—We admit that no improvements in husbandry can be expected to keep pace with many of those in manufacture. But still, we cannot but believe that the labours of the farmer, upon the various qualities of the soil, are far more productive than they were a few years before the war; and unless the landowners have, for the last forty years, been indulging in mere idle boasts, great advances have, during that period, been made in the science of agriculture. The numerous agricultural societies, long established in various parts of the kingdom, by the union of which their present great central association is formed, all had for their objects the encouragement of ingenuity and skill in the devising and bringing to perfection of new methods and new implements, and also the extensive diffusion of the knowledge of such discoveries. Was the promise to 'make two blades of grass grow where only one grew before,' a gross delusion on the public expectation?"

"THE FARMERS' BURDENS.—We must suggest the substitution of the more comprehensive words *cost of production* for the word 'burden.' And in speaking of the cost of production, every charge between the grower and the consumer must be taken into the account. The charge of conveyance from the one to the other is one of those which have been materially reduced; and, connected with that charge, is also the state of the allocation of the people. Not only has one universal system of road-making rendered all parts of England mutually accessible to each other, but the accidents of localities, and the attraction of manufacturers, have caused the people to be far more equally distributed than formerly. The dense, and chiefly new population of our manufacturing districts, is placed in a position, flanked on three sides, by England, Scotland, and Ireland. The mouths have met the corn half-way, and that half-way is traversed with increased facility. The apparent lowness of the present price of corn, is, in a great measure, to be accounted for by an equalization of prices thus brought about; and this proposition would be made very apparent, if we had the means of striking a present and a former average, taking, in both cases, the prices *at the barn-door*. Particular lands, favourably situated under the old system, must have now to contend with an enlarged domestic competition. The Middlesex hay-farmers have long felt the effects of the Paddington Canal, and of the macadamized roads round London, which have occasioned the bulky commodities of hay and straw to be brought from a more extended circle. There are mere illustrations of trifling instances; but the great cases of improved distribution are those of Ireland and of Scotland—of steam navigation—of canals, and of railways—all of which, even now, may be considered as only in an incipient state. A ready distribution of pruning produce has led to an equalization of its prices; and the productions of many extensive districts, formerly of little value, now partake of the average which is the result.

"These are effects upon property in land, which the landowners cannot resist or control. The United Kingdom will be, and must be, treated as a whole; and it is in the ordinary nature of things to suppose, and to expect, that if, in their new predicament, all the lots of land are thrown into one general mass of equality, upon the redrawing many that before were prizes will turn out blanks; and many of the old blanks will be new prizes. For this great and still



progressing change, the landed interest must prepare themselves. They may demand protection against foreigners with what confidence they please; but protection against Ireland and against Scotland—against bogs reclaimed and marshes drained—protection against domestic improvement—against the progress of science, and the industry of their fellow-countrymen—they can never have at the hands of a British Parliament. The price always to be considered is the price of the three kingdoms, under every possible advance in the art of life; and we must insist, that the mere fact before us, that the average in the chief markets of England is now five or six shillings lower than it was before the war, constitutes no proof that the people of England cannot be supplied from the lands of Great Britain and Ireland with wheat at the present price, yielding a fair trading profit to a sufficient number of producers in the cultivation of a sufficient quantity of our national soil.”

“LOCAL CHARGES UPON LAND.—Every possible improvement in details ought, no doubt, to be made in their collection and administration; and such ameliorations are in progress. The tithes will be commuted, and the barbarism of a charge upon *gross* produce will soon become, like its rude origin, matter of history only: and we may anticipate, also, that an assimilation of some sort will, before long, place Ireland, in respect of an unemployed pauper population, more nearly than she now is, upon a footing with England. But let not the sanguine agriculturist believe that the pecuniary advantages of these measures will settle themselves quietly into his pocket. When the cultivator of the soil is unrestrained in his spirited improvements,—as he often now is, by the deadening calculation, that if his invested hundred pounds increase only by ten pounds, an ample return in any other case, he will close the account with no more than ninety-nine pounds in his pocket—it may be expected, that much increased capital will be expended upon our lands, and that much increase of produce, to supply our markets the more abundantly, and therefore the more cheaply, will be the result. And again, when under a system of poor laws in Ireland, human beings are no longer found to be contending for small plots of land to preserve existence; and when the estates in that country can therefore be allotted into suitable farms, and the people can be divided into masters and

workmen, it may be expected, that the system of good and business-like husbandry, which then will assuredly supersede the present miserable practices, must tend to increase the productions of that naturally fertile island, in a degree far exceeding that degree in which its home consumption will be at the same time enlarged. That that consumption will, to the gratification of every humane mind, be much enlarged by such changes of condition cannot be doubted. It is also to be believed that fewer starving Irish will then cross the channel for employment, in competition with English labourers. These two anticipations of our landed interest in England will be specifically realized, when, by the operation of a poor law, Ireland shall be no longer permitted to export human food, while her population are dying with famine. But the English landlords will be disappointed of those pecuniary advantages to themselves, for the sake of which they urge the adoption of the measure."

"RENTS.—Rents are private contracts in which the public has no voice, unless appealed to by the parties themselves. That the rents need not be reduced in the ratio of the reduction of the price of corn is perfectly clear, if the other costs of production have, as we believe they have, been reduced in a still greater degree. Land is the raw material of corn, and its value computed in rent must, like the value of other raw materials, be governed by the state of supply and demand. The improvements in husbandry and the increased facilities of conveyance which have been already noticed are equivalent to the new acquisition of a larger surface of fertile lands, which, in proportion to their quantity and quality, tend to diminish in various degrees the ground of rent for the better parts of the older possessions, and to destroy that of the worst. It cannot now be said that we throw our inferior soils out of cultivation, by admitting the produce of the rich soils of foreign countries; the cuckoo-note of this old and once constant cry is completely silenced. The operative cause is in our own richer or more tractable soils, which, under the application of greater skill, are increasing in productiveness at even a faster rate than the population increases to consume its produce. Some partial inconvenience may be suffered in such a case, but it is without remedy. What owner of a poor soil will have the front to propose, in these days, that the cultiva-

tion of certain lands, or the use of certain systems at home, shall be prohibited? We say pointedly, *in these days*, for the attempt, if made, would not be without a precedent; the owners of the old meadows in England once petitioned for the prohibition of the artificial grasses."

Mr. Hume was acquainted with the science of agriculture as well as with the principles of trade, and he expected great advances in both. But he never ventured, we suspect, to foretell that in the year 1858, so vast a stride would be compassed as has been announced to the world in the following passage respecting the general application of steam to agricultural purposes. After pointing to many successful instances, the *Times* practically remarks:—

"Cultivators of the intractable weald of Kent and Sussex, of the London, Oxford, and lias clays, need not now suffer enormous losses of capital in the wearing out of horses and poor returns of cropping on the land, unsurpassed in native richness, but hitherto locked against our defective mechanics: and 600*l.* to 800*l.* outlay, though it may equal a year's rent, will be well invested in steam-tilling apparatus. Proprietors who would augment their estates without stretching the area, namely, by deepening the staple: extensive occupiers under secure tenure, who have capital at command when profit is at stake: and men who would make a business of ploughing as well as threshing for hire will be purchasers of the more costly and powerful machinery. While smaller farmers can adapt a plough or scarifier to their present portable engine for a sum

varying from 200*l.* to 300*l.*—only the price of some six or eight cart-horses.

“It is not merely the British agriculturist that will be profited. Already the steam-plough is started in Cuba; the sugar-growers want it in Jamaica and Demerara where the blacks won't work; and, indeed, the West Indies first agitated the question, experiments having been made ten or twenty years ago with especial view to their requirements. Australia, New Zealand, and other dear labour colonies are not slow to seize upon mechanical improvements; and Canada and the States are ready for any discovery that can expedite production and lessen field labour. Our continental friends, too, from their large purchases of engines, reapers, and labour-saving tools, are awake to the merits of steam-power in husbandry, while their peasants are being draughted to the idle camp. We congratulate the English farmer on the opening of a new era in mechanical agriculture. The steam-engine feeding, after clothing and furnishing a nation, will form a grand chapter in our industrial history; and the ‘sons of the soil,’ no longer driven to pauperism or emigration, may with the busy town operatives bless the good genius of James Watt.”

The first of the following letters was written to a correspondent upon receiving some copies of a pamphlet on Currency. The latter portion refers to a question which Mr. Hume had recently proposed for discussion at the Political Economy Club. “Is it rightly said, as stated by Mr. Ricardo, that ‘commodities measure

money, as money measures commodities'? And, if so, is not a high price of commodities as well as a high price of gold on a local currency necessary to complete the proof of depreciation?"

*"Board of Trade, 10th Jan., 1836.*

"The Clubbists to whom I sent the letter are Senior, Tooke, Blake, Jones Loyd, McCulloch, and Torrens. If I had made a seventh it would have been Parnell. Mr. Tooke called to say that he had received such a present—and that he contemplated writing to you to say, among other things, that Mr. Blake, the above-named, had written a pamphlet on Exchanges, in which he had drawn such an argument as yours from the low prices of exportable articles. Mr. Tooke is now re-writing his work upon 'high and low prices,'—and as he professes to record the facts of the times under these heads, he says that he shall show, more prominently than he did before, the state of the circumstances which you have made your present particular topic.

"We have had no meeting of the Club since the letter appeared, but on the first Thursday in next month I shall expect to hear something about it.

"I remember now that Mr. Blake did write a very clever treatise on Exchanges, in which he undertook to show that their depression might be brought about by the operation of circumstances distinct from depression. He was, unfortunately for me, not at the Club the night my question was argued; but I have learnt that had he been there I should have had his support. Colonel Torrens was a good deal shaken: Jones Loyd was with me: Tooke could not forgive certain issues of bank-notes, I think, about 1809: but Senior and McCulloch fired point-blank shots against all qualifications of a high price of gold.

"Mr. Tooke does not think that the Club is to be considered as unanimous upon the point. I am aware of this; but I knew and felt that, in effect, the sense of the Club was against me."

*"Eltham, 4th October, 1836.*

"I have carried your letter in my pocket ever since I received it, and with the never-ceasing intention of taking a good opportunity of returning an ample answer. Such opportunities have of late been very rare. Not because I have been unusually

engaged in official business, but from a want of my ordinary appliances. Painters and paperers have turned me out of house and home: and thus I am deprived of that fund of time, upon which I have been accustomed to draw so largely when most other people were in bed. Besides, I have taken once more to the saddle, and many spare hours have been employed in proving its superiority over blue pill. And I have proved it, for I am better in health than I have been for many years past. My colleague, Mr. Le Marchant, has only now completed his recovery from a violent bilious fever; and in consequence of his unavoidable absence, all my holidays have been comprised in two Saturdays until this day, when I superadded a Friday; and in the night of which I am here at Eltham, the only person up, endeavouring to execute my long-intended purpose. Seeing no hope of a furlough, I have located my family here, and contented myself with riding up and down, as often as I could, until winter, or wintry weather, drives us home again. Here you have my apology, my history, and my bulletin; and now for a few words upon some of the topics of your letter. Your remarks upon the 'tone' of the H. B. T. letters coincides with my own opinion. Had I been writing for a pamphlet at first, instead of a newspaper, and without the most distant idea of further publication, the tone would certainly have been softened down. When the idea of reprinting arose, and that certainly not with me, I had an inclination to re-write the whole, and give it as the substance of the letters. But there was no time for such a course, and I could only add such prefatory remarks as should preserve an account of the origin, as some apology for the tone. Were I to think it worth while to undertake such a task even now, I would not suffer my corrections to be more than those of style and expression. Nothing should be abated of my indignation at the manner in which the owners of the lands of the country testify their affronting notices, that, in some way or other, they have a proprietary right in the people also. If we only make a fair distinction between the state of public opinion and intelligence in the feudal times and of that opinion in these later days, it appears to me that a corn law *now* is quite as tyrannical as feudalism was *then*. To usurp a power of the pocket in the present state of civilization, is as arbitrary as it was to claim the person in a barbarous age. This ground I should take without the slightest

reservation, or the appearance of yielding an inch of it: but in my defensive position I might stand more erect upon it, and preserve rather a sterner countenance than I did in the fugitive letters. But, believe me, I have no thought of undertaking such a task. Everything of the kind is utterly useless: time and the progress of knowledge in the body of the people can alone work remedies in these cases. A period of severe scarcity may perhaps come in to hasten the cure.\*

“With regard to the letter on the bullion question, can anything be more manifest than the occasional inaccessibility of the public mind upon some subjects? I have ‘tried it on’ upon the Political Economy Club, and I then found, that I gained only a few converts; but McCulloch, and Senior, and Parnell, *et hoc genus omne*, although not one of them said a single word which could reconcile a low price of exportable goods with a high price of gold, as evidence of a depreciated currency, still they ended where they began, and claimed the whole price of gold during the period referred to, as the measure of the alleged depreciation.

“The only use of the argument is, to stop the mouths of the agriculturists, who are clamouring for an alteration in the standard; and yet the political economists—the greatest enemies to such a proceeding—will not avail themselves of the weapon offered to their hand. There is no chance of rendering the proposition useful, unless these persons come in with their adhesions, and assist to enforce it upon the public mind.

“You ask my opinion on the present condition of the circulating medium. I have been watching it closely for some months, and am compelled to say that I expect an increase of the present difficulties. The pinch has not yet come, and the Bank will have to give several more turns to the screw, before it will be tight enough to force away the redundance. The joint-stock banks, chiefly, have done the mischief; but the Bank is greatly to blame in not having foreseen, that if it did not draw in, the two together would produce excess. The Bank must be content to see a portion of their business pass into the hands of joint stocks.

“It is surprising to what an extent a great fundamental error on

\* This prediction was fulfilled in the year 1846, when the failure of the potato crop in Ireland and the deficient harvest caused the abolition of the Corn Laws.

this subject prevails. Men think it sufficient that the banking establishments should be solvent; they imagine that the only thing to fear is, lest failures should occur, and the holders of notes should not be paid. This is mistaking solvency for currency; as if the rich might innocently convert their properties into circulating medium. The greater the confidence in the banks, the greater is the liability to the mischief; private security here becomes public evil. I believe that the security of creditors at this time is unusually good, for the debtors have acted with great prudence with relation to their private affairs; but there will be great losses, although there may be few bankrupts.

“We occasionally see in the ‘City Articles’ accounts of ‘improvement’—‘money less scarce,’ and the like. These are bad indications. The complaint is plethora, and the bloated face is not a sign of convalescence. The permanent remedies are, a smaller unfunded debt, and a reduced issue of bank-notes. It will require a watchful eye, and a steady hand, to bring about the re-adjustment. I think that a portion of the cost will fall upon the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and that all will not fall upon the Bank.

“Politics are at this time a disagreeable topic to a man who is of no party. I see such great faults in my old friends the Tories, that I cannot travel by their side. I have heard it said, that Peel is ready to bid very high in the auction of liberalism if any opening should occur. This may be good tactics for a party man, and all fair, for what I know; but my idea is, that the Tories should have been liberal a little sooner—or, rather, a great deal sooner; and when I compare what they are ready to do, with what they have refused, my mind recoils at the terms in which they *continue* to abuse the Whigs. I say this may be all very right and fair with *parties*, but a common man like myself, with one plain subject before him, cannot chime in with such modes of proceeding. I cannot take up a new station with every move. The Tories have fully recognised the necessity of progress; and they seem to me to keep always one or two steps behind the Whigs, only for the sake of a point of distinction for a grand quarrel.\* Step by step

\* The friend to whom this letter was addressed, replied, with some effect, to this particular accusation, “I do not think you are quite fair to the Conservatives (Tories are gone). Surely, it is too hard to say that ‘they keep one or two steps behind the Whigs, only for the sake of a point of distinction, for a ground of quarrel.’ Do you think



it has been so hitherto; and, mark me, step by step it will be so hereafter.

But my fears for the country in the end, are removed. I see that the people may be trusted. If there had been any foundation for the former alarm at granting *any* thing, how should there be a reaction? The truth is, that every concession has satisfied a stratum of discontent, and made an addition to the mass who cry 'hold enough.' My idea is, that the increase of conservatism arises from a contentment at what has been done, and not out of alarm at the move which may follow."

"9th November.

"But *you* think more of *foreign* affairs. Spain is indeed a failure; and if Lord Palmerston ought to have known that Louis Philippe is the most cold-blooded traitor that ever lived, he will have hard work in showing an excuse for having entered into a league with such a man. It may run the Ministers hard, particularly as they are likely to have several other great and distressing difficulties upon their hands, such as often prove too much for any Administration. Much has transpired within the last three weeks, which may create apprehensions of a high price of provisions, and of slack employment; there are even indications of a hard winter; and the opposition papers are already laying their plans for attributing the distress which the lower orders may suffer, to the new Poor Law, although nothing is more certain than that it had the hearty concurrence of the Tories. But all this would be no bed of roses to succeed to. Peel did not himself choose his time before; I doubt whether he would like such a time as I am imagining: although he would have the benefit of hope of relief in his favour, while the blame of the cause would be thrown upon his prede-

that when Lord Stanley separated from his hereditary party, and from his personal friends, and resigned his office, he did so for the sake of a point of distinction, and a ground of quarrel? Lord Stanley had every personal motive which could actuate a public man to get rid of every point of distinction and ground of quarrel. He was the first man of his own party, when Lord Grey, then upwards of seventy-three, retired. He could only be the second in the party to which he was about to unite. But regardless of ambition, so vital did he think the distinction to be, that, to satisfy his conscience, he flung to the winds all other less honest considerations."

cessors. How often shall we change before we get an Administration strong enough to disregard Radicals and Ultra-Tories? That is the great question after all."

*"Board of Trade, 18th November, 1836.*

"If I recollect rightly, a wish is somewhere expressed in the H. B. T. letters, that they might become materials for other years. You are heartily welcome to realise that wish for me. Keep in mind that the bullionists commence with simply saying, 'gold is gold, and gold cannot be dear in gold, &c.' that when gold seems to be dear, it is only that goods and money are cheap. But the Horners, Huskissons, Ricardos, &c., think that this appears too much in the light of an arbitrary dogma for the understandings of men in general, and therefore, in order to establish its truth, they set themselves to work to write books to show the *how* and the *why* of the case. I will venture to say, that through the whole of these books there shall not be found a sentence, which, if touching on the point, does not go to establish the dearness of goods, as the main test of depreciation.

"A tyro, therefore, having learnt his lesson from these instructors, sets to work to try a particular case by the tests given him; and he finds the result the very opposite of that which he was taught to expect.

"The best foundation, consequently, for further remarks seems to be a complete establishment of the invariableness of this doctrine in the words of these writers." \* \* \* \* \*

"Agricultural Bank of Ireland—the run has been too hard for it. I think I see the fate of the last holds of the noxious one-pound notes. The fall in our corn markets may be attributed to the anticipated difficulties of the holders of corn in Ireland. They must occasion a temporary glut. This is a bad consequence, because it will give the Americans a power of pre-emption in Europe. Great, very great evils are upon the cards. I hope that the opposition will not calculate too nicely the 'degree of misfortune' to which Wilberforce once pointed, as just sufficient to turn out a Minister. They may not quite hit the mark."

*"15, Russell Square, 20th June, 1837.*

"If the Americans stick to their rule, that every bank shall be limited in its amount of paper issue, and that limit be as narrow as

it is considered to be, I do not think that much specie will be got from them. But mark what a different cash suspension this is from what the Attwoodites desire. Therefore, if the example of America be referred to, we should point to this distinction; and also to the bargain that the banks are to pay no dividends till they pay cash again.

“The present peculiar shape of the currency question I take to be this. We have *unconsciously* expended our circulating medium, for a year or two back, just in the way which those who think with us approve, and would do openly. But we are now brought up quick, with a sharp curb, *because the Bank must pay in cash*. That party, therefore, thinks that the merit of *their* plan is proved; for that we have only to add suspension, and the prosperity would be permanent.

“The other party say, that the utter rottenness of that plan is completely proved by the shock to which the partial trial of it has subjected us; and that the attempt to continue the ‘prosperity’ by a bank suspension would either, and most probably, fail at once, through the anticipated fears of its ultimate consequences on the part of thinking people; or, it would go on, until the bubble burst from its own weakness, and ruin of the most appalling nature would involve the nation and its people in both public and private bankruptcy.

“Prices would keep rising, step by step, and from season to season, till the *dullest* and the boldest would begin to suspect, that such magnificent accounts could never be settled according to their nominal terms: a distrust of the bank-notes would commence, their depreciation would be evidenced too clearly by the exchanges and the price of gold; and, every man beginning to secure his own retreat, the most dreadful panic conceivable would ensue.

“This would arise from the immense difference between a temporary suspension, like that in the war, and a suspension which was, avowedly, to be permanent. In the *first* case, the public had always land in sight, and they waited for the order to cast anchor; in the *second*, they would soon begin to think that they were sailing in a boundless ocean without a rudder, a pilot, or a plumb-line to inform them of their depth; and they could not long endure such painful feelings. It is the most mistaken idea in the world to suppose that the public mind would quietly acquiesce

in a permanent bank suspension:—and if it would not, why then, 'Peel's Bill' is not the cause of that state of things which the Attwoods consider to be an unnecessary contraction of our prosperous movements. Suppose that, instead of passing Peel's Bill, its opponents had succeeded in passing an Act which was to make the suspension permanent, and that the public had placed full confidence, at first, in the successful operation of such a measure,—then all that I have been describing would have occurred long ago; and we should, at this time, be many, many steps behind the position of prosperity in which we now stand.

"You see my main point is that the public *could not* have confidence in paper which was never to be brought to the test; and we know full well that nothing upon the public feeling in that respect has been tried.

"As to the question of a silver standard, and the repeal of the law against exporting coins, these relate only to *small percentages*; and although the Attwoods raise them in despair, they are wholly inconsistent with, and inadequate to, the objects and ends which they profess to intend and to aim at."

The first sentence in the following letter refers to a tour through Wales, and some of the adjacent counties, which Mr. Hume undertook in company with a friend early in the autumn of 1837.

*"Board of Trade, Whitehall, 12th Oct., 1837.*

"I have lately returned from the most extended trip I have ever made, and it was then only that I got possession of your letter. I am well satisfied with your currency observations at the election, and now the more so as you said nothing about lowering the standard.

"The relations between the precious metals and transferable objects are undergoing a change. The *tendency* is to a lowering of prices; and this furnishes the great temptation to excessive banking: but it is not a sufficient reason for departing from the sanctity of an unalterable metallic measure. Men and things are outgrowing gold and silver, but the effect is too slow materially to injure any one generation; and it must be borne as the minor evil. Notwithstanding all the errors which have been committed in banking, it does not follow that it may not be even extended

without a renewal of them. Many countries have, as yet, scarcely availed themselves of the system; and, in proportion as they adopt it, they will release a quantity of metal. The idea that one scale of prices is more proper than another is a great mistake: the mischief lies in sudden changes, and these will never be produced by fluctuations in the general supply of the metals. Gold cannot keep pace with the steam-engine,—as we multiply commodities by machinery they must individually represent less money. The idea of an arbitrary price for corn is at the root of all the misconceptions which distract the senses of the community.

“The increased produce of the British dominions must be something most enormous, when we reflect that we are luxuriously feeding a doubled population: need we wonder, then, that the specific price of each quarter cannot be maintained?—or, indeed, can any good reason be given for expecting that it should, any more than that every piece of calico should be as dear as formerly?”

The following questions were proposed by Mr. Hume for discussion at the Political Economy Club, besides the one which has been already alluded to.\* Of questions proposed before the year 1835, there appears to be no available record.

“*March 5, 1835.*—Ought a compulsory provision against destitution to exist wherever there is exclusive property in land?”

“*December 1, 1836.*—What are the causes and probable consequences of the present pressure on the money market?”

“*February 10, 1839.*—Are there any sufficient reasons for any duty on foreign corn?”

Of the arguments made use of in the discussion of these questions we have no information.

\* Page 169.

## CHAPTER VII.

## LIFE INSURANCE—THE ATLAS—THE CUSTOMS' BENEVOLENT FUND,

"An institution which improves the condition and respectability of public servants as a class, and relieves their anxiety for their dependent families, must qualify them the better for their official situations, and therefore confer advantages also upon the public service."—*Treasury Minute on the Benevolent Fund.*

MR. DEACON HUME was a great advocate of life insurance. He was associated with several individuals in establishing the "Atlas," one of the oldest and most considerable of these institutions, and which owed its success in no trifling degree to his exertions. He continued to be Deputy Chairman to the time of his death.

This volume would be incomplete if it did not give some account of the rise and progress of a kindred association, the Customs' Benevolent Fund. The project originated, in 1816, with Mr. Charles Ogilvy, at that time a clerk in the long room at the Custom House. But, as the Report of the Directors in 1856 states, "it was worked out and brought to maturity entirely by the ability and influence of Mr. J. Deacon Hume, for many years, from the commencement of the institution, President of the Fund." No one could have been found more able to introduce and carry out the scheme.

As a preliminary step to its introduction, a meeting of officers and clerks of the Customs was held on the 25th of April, 1816, Mr. Deacon Hume in the chair. The object and nature of the scheme were then fully explained, and the meeting having approved of its principles, appointed seven officers of the Customs as a "Temporary Committee of Formation," to prepare a plan of the contemplated institution for the consideration of a further general meeting. The Committee was also instructed to invite the co-operation of other public departments—as the projectors desired and hoped, "that they should be able to lay the foundation of an institution which, at some future day, would be found to embrace within the range of its protection the widows and children of almost every officer of the Civil Service."

With this view the Committee, in the first instance, addressed letters to the secretaries of the Excise Office, of the Stamp Office, of the Post Office, and of the Tax Office, but no answers were received. A letter was also addressed to the Secretary of the Board of Customs in Scotland, and that department declined to join. The notion of extending it to other public offices was abandoned. Believing, however, that the department of the Customs alone was sufficiently numerous in itself to form an association, the Committee determined to establish a fund, to be confined to the Customs alone.

Having agreed upon the outline and general principles upon which the projected institution should be governed, and having obtained the approval of a

meeting of officers and clerks of the Customs, with the consent of the Board, the Committee submitted the scheme for the approbation and sanction of the Lords of the Treasury in a memorial dated the 24th May, 1816. It was stated in this memorial, amongst other things, "That the anxiety of your memorialists for a local institution of this nature within their own department is chiefly felt in behalf of the interest and welfare of persons of small incomes who may need the prudence and decision necessary to induce them to insure their lives with any of the public companies already established." Their lordships had several conferences with the Committee, and after the project had been carefully and fully expounded to them, signified officially their consent to it in a letter to the Committee, dated the 20th June, 1816. And with the sanction and encouragement of their lordships, the Act of Parliament establishing the Fund was passed, and is dated the 22nd of June, 1816. The Act embodies two peculiar features, with which the scheme originally commenced. First, the certainty and permanency of the provision for the claimants. Secondly, the poundage charge of one penny upon salaries. It was expected that by the aid and influence of this auxiliary fund, although small, the benefits of the institution would ultimately be diffused generally throughout the department, and it could scarcely exist without it. The certainty and permanency of the provision is secured by the 11th section of the Act, which treats the produce of the insurance as an "alimentary provision" for widows and



other claimants, and bars the right of creditors thereon. It gives the form of a reversionary settlement, and this settlement, in the case of the widow, makes it secure and permanent even against the debts or control of any future husband. It is a settlement under the force of an Act of Parliament for her sole benefit for life, payable to her upon her own receipt only.

But, in connection with the security the Act affords to the insurance, the application of the insurance itself is, at the same time, limited for the sole benefit of widows, children, relatives, and, under the admission of the directors, of special nominees of subscribers. It could not be expected that, jointly with the protection, subscribers should also have an "unlimited" power to dispose of their insurances as they would in public assurance offices; and, although the Fund was to be raised on the principles of life assurance, yet this protection, and the very limited power of appointment possessed by the subscribers, materially distinguish it from other assurance offices. But Mr. Hume, who was a correct as well as a close observer of the human mind, knew well that this limitation would require substantial advantages to counteract it—advantages which would sooner or later be apparent. And it was chiefly with this view that the poundage was insisted upon. Its design was to impart such aid and support to the fund as would counteract all adverse inclinations, from whatever cause arising, by securing to it a marked preference over common assurance societies. Poundage obviously increased the value of insurances, and these

values went on increasing periodically at the awards of profit until, in course of time, their accumulations would so strikingly manifest the substantial advantages of the fund as to make persons anxious to join the association, and so secure the complete success of the scheme.

Great stress was laid by the Committee of Formation on the question of poundage, and in obtaining the grant. To adopt the language of Mr. Hume in one of his early reports, "The question propounded to the Lords of the Treasury was in substance this—whether the fathers of those young men, whom they might be pleased thereafter to appoint to situations in the Customs, would be expected to hold those situations to be of less value to their sons, on account of so trifling a deduction from the salary as one penny in the pound, considering the use to which that penny was to be applied. Or would their lordships hold their patronage to be less valuable by reason of such a deduction for such an application."

"Their lordships deliberated upon the proposition; they discovered no objection; and they signified their compliance." Mr. Hume, in his report, continued,—  
"As most persons were appointed to public offices early in life, celibacy was not anticipated, nor were bachelors always without dependent relatives; and the very trifling deduction of one penny in the pound from the salaries of such persons was not considered by the Lords of the Treasury to constitute a larger payment than the chance of having occasion to avail themselves of the Fund might be deemed to be worth."

A report of the Directors in 1837, written by Mr. Hume in return to a Treasury reference on a contemplated Excise Fund, leads to the conclusion that the formation of the Customs' Fund mainly depended upon the consent of the Lords of the Treasury to the grant of poundage. Speaking of poundage, the report goes on to say:—"We have reason to believe that, if this poundage had not been granted, the persons by whom the project of the Fund was first promoted would not have proceeded with their endeavours to bring it to maturity."

Apart from the more solid advantages which the Fund may have derived from poundage, the experience of the last forty years has shown that more persons were induced to effect insurances on their lives from the payment of poundage than from any other cause. To some it is a quarterly admonition that they have a duty to perform which, if longer neglected, might consign their families to want and penury. To others it leads to inquiry, and they find, from actual facts and results presented to them from the records and experience of the office, that the Fund opens to them a mode of securing a provision for their families best suited in all respects to their means. And all arrive at the important fact, that the contribution of poundage ultimately returns, increased in value, to the widows and families *alone* of the members of the Association. Many, who, having been in the service at the establishment of the Fund, and, under the provisions of the Act of Parliament, declined to accede to the contribution of

poundage, upon witnessing the projects and development of the Institution, have consented to pay a heavy settled entrance fee, in order to qualify themselves to become members.

The Fund always contained a provision enabling the directors, with the approval of a meeting of subscribers, to make benevolent grants to the *destitute* widows and families or dependant relatives of deceased contributors of poundage, who had failed to effect insurances in the Fund for their benefit. With the concurrence of subscribers the directors do not confine themselves to the strict letter of the rules by making absolute destitution the sole ground for the relief, but have acted upon a liberal interpretation of the rules for benevolent grants, and been guided by the necessities of each case.

Besides the poundage, the Fund derives another valuable source of income from the Bill of Entry Office, which has been annexed to the Fund almost from its commencement. It was that which Mr. Hume had in his mind, when he stated in his report which accompanied the first code of rules, that, "It is by no means improbable that out of the multifarious concerns of so extensive a department as the Customs, some sources of adventitious assistance may hereafter present themselves; and confident may the members of the Institution be, that every fair proposal to promote its success will be kindly entertained by the Lords of the Treasury, to whose paternal care alone the Institution owes its existence."

The application of the Bill of Entry Office, as will be

seen by the following condensed account of evidence given before a Parliamentary Committee, was not originally suggested by Mr. Hume, but the sanction and approval of the Lords of the Treasury to the measure were obtained chiefly through his influence.

#### CUSTOM HOUSE BILL OF ENTRY.

At one of the meetings of the Select Committee on "Sinecure Offices within the United Kingdom," which made its Report on the 24th of July, 1834, Mr. Hume was examined with reference to the "Custom House Benevolent Fund." The subject arose out of an inquiry made by Mr. Ewart, at that time member for Liverpool, respecting the appropriation of the profits of a journal called the "Customs' Bill of Entry," which had long been prepared and sold under a patent right vested in particular individuals. Mr. Frankland Lewis, M.P., stated in evidence to the Committee that the office came into his family, he believed, by purchase of a Sir Andrew King, about the year 1720. That during the time that he held it, it was worth 1,000*l.* per annum on an average; but that about the year 1811, it suited his family arrangements to transfer it to his mother, and that it was held in trust for her use and benefit, by her brother-in-law, Robert Nicholas, Esq., chairman of the Board of Excise, and that she duly received the net proceeds. From 1811 he ceased to have any control over, or interest in, the publication. In 1817, the Directors of the "Custom House Benevolent Fund" applied to him personally to know who the persons

were with whom they could negotiate for a transfer to them of the patent itself, and the duties connected with it. He referred them to Mr. Nicholas, with whom they negotiated. An agreement was entered into, the ultimate effect of which was the transfer to the Directors of the Custom House Fund, of the rights, duties, privileges, and emoluments arising from the patent.\* The agreement involved the expediency of a surrender of the existing patent, and a new patent was granted by the Treasury for the purpose of enabling the agreement to be carried into effect, it being distinctly understood by the Treasury that the agreement was a beneficial one to the public service. The publication itself was of great use to the commercial world. The application of the money, according to the rules of the Custom House Benevolent Fund, is a public benefit, inasmuch as it is part payment to the persons engaged in the Custom House; for if they derive considerable emoluments from the Benevolent Fund over and above the money they subscribe to it, out of the money arising from the sale of this publication,† they are thereby placed in a situation to require less in the nature of retired allowance or provision for widows, than they would require if no such advantage were held out to them when they entered the service of the Customs. The office of clerk of the Bills of Entry is in some points under the control of the

\* For the sum of 28,000*l.*, calculated upon the probability of the patent being perpetually renewed.

† Mr. Plank, Secretary to the Customs' Benevolent Fund, stated in evidence that the entire emoluments accruing to the Customs from the privilege of preparing the Bills of Entry, was about 11,000*l.* a year.

Lords of the Treasury; it was especially required to be so placed by Mr. Pitt, on the renewal of the patent in the year 1789. Many times during the late war it was held to be injurious to commerce, particularly when Bonaparte's decrees and the Orders in Council were in force, that the ports from which and to which particular articles were imported and exported should be published, and directions were sent from the Treasury not to print the name of any port in possession of the French troops; the entries were made in blank: the merchants of the City of London knew enough of the real state of commerce to understand where the goods came from, and whither they went; but as that was not so distinctly understood on the other side of the water, the ships were not condemned when they returned, say to the port of Hamburg or the port of Flushing, or any port in the possession of the enemy, after an illegal voyage, although they would have been confiscated if it had been known when such a ship returned, that she had loaded her cargo in Great Britain instead of the foreign neutral port, from which she had nominally and fictitiously cleared out. On many occasions during the war directions were sent from the Treasury to omit altogether entries of the export of warlike stores.

Mr. Frankland Lewis concluded his evidence by stating that, in his opinion, if the Bills of Entry publication was to be correct and valuable, the clerks of the Customs must be interested generally in the support of it, and it would then be put on a footing by which the public would be essentially benefited.

Mr. Deacon Hume, who was next examined, said, that previous to his leaving the Custom House in the year 1828, he rendered all the assistance of which his advice and influence were capable, in putting an end to many infractions of the patent which had been alluded to, by the clerks in the Custom House, but that he did not work in any way in the matter. Mr. Ogilvy, a clerk in the long room, a person of very great talent, who projected the Custom-house Fund (and also suggested the idea of acquiring the exercise of this patent for the benefit of the Fund), had the management. It was given to him in 1817, and he held it to the time of his death, in 1832. So much reliance was placed on his management of the matter, that one-half of the emoluments which the Customs derived was assigned him for his trouble. At the time when the agreement was entered into with Mr. Frankland Lewis, a great change and improvement certainly took place, and consequently there was considerable increase in the revenue derived from it. Before that period the Bills of Entry were prepared in such a manner as could afford very little information to purchasers, and certainly none that could be depended upon. The first step taken by the directors of the Fund to give confidence to the publication, was to disturb a practice which had prevailed in the different offices at the Custom House of taking a fee from any merchant who wished to have the publication of his entry suppressed, which had been an every day practice. It ceased immediately and completely. He did not mean to say the clerks of the Custom House, as



clerks of the Custom House, suppressed the entries: it was done by the clerk of the Custom House who was employed by the patentee. He employed one or more of the clerks in the long room as his agents, to collect the information, and that clerk kept the particular entry out of the publication, for which he received a fee from the merchant. The chief clerk's selecting clerks in the long room to be his agents, was an incidental circumstance, he need not have done so; he might have sent clerks of his own. The clerks suppressed any entry for which the merchant paid half-a-crown. He had seen it done a thousand times. The Commissioners, as he believed, not being called upon, never gave themselves any concern upon the subject. He imagined that the patentee was not aware of the practice. What the merchant paid for was, that any particular entry in the Custom House books should be suppressed in the official Bill of Entry. And the new practice occasioned much emotion in the trade, there being many parties having different objects. There were as many merchants at first who wished for a continuance of the former practice as those who felt the increased value of the document by reason of its discontinuance, but the desire of improving the document in the end prevailed. Persons who used the Bill of Entry were, he conceived, aware of the liability of omission, for probably all had on different occasions availed themselves of it. If there could be any persons who used it and were unacquainted with the practices alluded to they would be deceived. The omissions

would not have the effect of vitiating the accuracy of the official returns compiled for Parliament, for the accounts were wholly distinct. When first the omission of entries was refused, it was complained of by many merchants; the question, in the form of complaint, was brought before the Commissioners of Customs by several persons, about the year 1817, and after much discussion between the superior officers and the trade, it was agreed that particular merchants might be allowed to postpone the publication of their outward entries for, he believed, a fortnight: the object of suppression, without eventually injuring the aggregate account in the publication, being sufficiently attained by the delay, a payment was made: but though it was heavy, the produce was exceedingly small to the Custom House fund. It was enforced solely with a view of checking the practice without totally forbidding it. It was rather a fine than a fee, and the amount was carried to the credit of the Benevolent Fund. Formerly the patentee's clerk received the fee for his own use. The Bill of Entry was published daily in London. The Custom House Benevolent Fund was instituted in the year 1817. He should say that it would be impracticable to admit competition respecting the publication of the Bills of Entry. It would be inadmissible with reference to the business of the Custom House. The admitting various persons to consult the books could not be borne. As to the suggestion that an officer of the establishment, acting under the authority and responsibility of the Commissioners, should make the

requisite publications correctly, the public being charged for such expense as might be incurred for the same, with equal accuracy as was then done by the Benevolent Fund, it might be practicable, but there would be much difficulty in attaching the responsibility with regard to the correctness. The present publishers, with no direct responsibility, had every stimulus to make the account as perfect as practicable. He did not believe that any publication similar to the Bill of Entry was given officially in any country. If he should be asked why there should be more difficulty in publishing the returns with accuracy than there is in keeping the many accounts of the Custom House, he would reply, that the clerk has ample time for checking and correcting. His previous answer was with reference to responsibility for the accuracy of the accounts. With regard to the despatch necessary to publish in the morning the business of the preceding day, which is such as must subject the account to much risk of inaccuracy, and might involve the officer employed in serious responsibility without affecting the correctness of any errors that might be material to the trade, he wished to distinguish between the accuracy for which a public officer would be responsible, and that for which a common publisher would be answerable, having at risk only his own emolument, and aiming at the degree of accuracy which would be necessary for his interest and the credit of his paper. He did not say that an individual not belonging to the establishment, and publishing the Bill of Entry, would not do

the duty with more accuracy than if he were a public servant, and were adequately paid for it, though he might believe so. He spoke of responsibility. The present returns, however, were as accurate as the most diligent clerks could make them; and the merchants had a reasonable confidence in them. Different merchants have different objects: it is impossible to adapt a publication so as to suit every man's views. He was asked whether omissions for want of room had not occasionally occurred in the list? The increase of business at the port of Liverpool had taken the Bill of Entry by surprise, and occasionally the paper had been incapable of holding all the names of the ships of the day, but the principle of the publication had rendered this a matter of no serious importance to the trade, because the number of ships entered out, and the number of ships clearing out, every day was always given; consequently, the number remaining on the books, as published in the bill of the preceding day, always enabled a broker or other interested person to see, by retrospect of that bill, whether the ship of which he wanted information, still remained on those books. No complaint had been made respecting the omission to any official quarter. Mr. Frankland Lewis considered the patent to be given up in the year 1817 for the benefit of the public service, and he (Mr. Hume), was asked whether he agreed with him in that opinion? He would answer that the improvements in the publication were a benefit to trade, and that it was a public service: he thought that the advantage de-

rived by the widows and orphans of the servants of the public, by so easy a mode, might justly be considered as a public service also. Mr. Frankland Lewis had mentioned that the retired allowance was affected by it, and he (Mr. Hume) was asked whether that was correct? In one sense it was. The plan of the subscription or premium by the officers and clerks to the Customs' Fund is, that it shall terminate at a certain period before the end of life; and consequently, when that time arrives at which an officer upon superannuation is suffering more reduction of his income, his premium to the Customs' Fund falls in, which makes the superannuation more easy. He had understood the Treasury to conceive that the public patronage received advantage from this mode of assisting officers, in making some provision for their widows and children. The circumstance of the party contributing to this Fund is not specifically taken into consideration in the case of superannuation. There are two separate publications, the "Bill of Entry," and the "Trade List." The "Bill of Entry" is simply the daily account of the entries of ships and merchandise at the Custom House; the "Trade List" gives once a week a compendious statement of those accounts, together with the usual matter of the Price Current. The "Trade List," on the face of it, is no more than an ordinary Price Current, as the Prices Current are in the habit of copying and compiling information from the Bills of Entry; but the "Trade List," which is in fact a Price Current, has the advantage under the rights of the patent, of publishing

that description of information in that compiled form, more early than the other Prices Current, who must copy it from the Bills of Entry. There are Bills of Entry (A) and (B). The first relates to goods entered inwards and outwards; the second, to ships entered outwards. The bills having undergone a total change and corresponding improvement in the year 1817, the price was increased. The question of price was, he believed, never brought before the Commissioners of Customs. When the patent was transferred to the Custom House Fund, an attempt was made by some parties to publish a document in competition with the Custom House Bill of Entry; but this issuing of information by manuscript to the trade was suppressed. It was an infringement of the patent. Anything may be copied from the "Bill of Entry." The "Trade List" is a losing concern; but it is thought as well to have it as part of the set of publications. It appeared in the returns that the sum of 2,349*l.* 16*s.* 8*d.*, exclusive of the amount received, was received the previous year for fees of suppression or furnishing separate manuscript information and details, exclusive of that in the printed papers. Every sum, in whatever way received, is carried to the general account of the Customs' Benevolent Fund, after the payment of rent to the patentee. Trinity House had, for a series of years, been obliged to pay 150*l.* a year for being furnished with a list of entries and departures of ships. It is an account prepared in a different shape to the Bill of Entries, and made to suit the particular purposes of Trinity House.

Considering the peculiar and additional labour it occasions, Trinity House willingly agrees to make the payment as a compensation for the clerical labour. The patent rights are considered in the payment. The whole is a matter of agreement between the parties.

The Select Committee presented their report to the House on the 26th of February. It was long and interesting. The paragraph which expressed their opinion upon the above-mentioned subject of inquiry, is in the following words:—

“Your Committee have taken some evidence upon the subject of the Customs’ Bill of Entry, which has long been prepared and sold, under a patent right vested in specific individuals. The commencement of that patent is of ancient date, but it seems to have been renewed from time to time in favour of the heirs or relatives, or assigns of the original patentee; and the last renewal dates in the year 1817, extending the privilege for thirty-one years, of which eighteen are still unexpired. The actual compilation of the ‘Bill of Entry,’ as it is sold to the public, is now exclusively performed by certain authorized officers of the Customs, who pay over out of the proceeds received from the sale, a fixed annuity of 2,000*l.* per annum to the patentee, according to a specific agreement entered into between them. The patentee does not interfere at all in the preparation of the document. Your Committee fully recognise the necessity of confining the right of inspecting the Custom House books, out of which the ‘Bill of Entry’ is extracted, to some official and autho-

rized party; but they trust that the patent, which is now running, will on no account be renewed; the emoluments of the Patentee being unconnected with any benefit to the public, and enhancing unduly the sale price of the 'Bill of Entry,' which appears to be exceedingly large. Your Committee recommend the subject to the consideration of the Treasury, in hopes that they may so exercise their control as to lighten this burden upon the mercantile world."

The Bill of Entry Office has now subsisted by patent under the Great Seal for nearly two centuries. In the year 1846 the directors obtained a renewal of the patent under which it is exercised. And although Mr. Hume did not live to see it, "I am sure," says one,\* who was associated with him at the Custom House, "he would have rejoiced, both as regards the mercantile public and the Customs' Fund, for to both it was certainly beneficial."†

Upon Mr. Hume's removal from the Custom House to the Board of Trade, he was presented with a silver epergne and plateau as a testimony to the services which he had rendered to this last-mentioned Institution.

\* G. Plank, Esq.

† The Directors of the Customs' Fund, in their Report, published in 1856, observe, that "they have especially kept the subscription price of the several printed Bills of Entry, as well as the charges for information in manuscript, at such rates as would, after paying reasonable charges of management, leave only a moderate surplus to be carried in aid of the Fund. The surplus of the whole of the ports of the United Kingdom for the year 1855, was only 4,197*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.*"



## CHAPTER VIII.

## DUTIES ON TIMBER.

"I beg to remind the house of the memorable dictum of Mr. Deacon Hume—we have abundance of untaxed coal, abundance of untaxed iron, we only want abundance of untaxed wood, in order to be provided cheaply with the three great primary raw materials of employment and of necessary consumption."—SIR ROBERT PEEL, 1842.

"THE full merits of this very important question," says the author of the "Progress of the Nation,"\* "may be learned by consulting the evidence given before the Select Committee of 1835, and also from an article in the fourth number of the 'British and Foreign Quarterly Review,' written by one of the most intelligent witnesses examined on the occasion." That witness, as will be anticipated, was the subject of this volume. There was but one other article, Mr. Hume was accustomed to say, to which he would sooner give perfect freedom from duty than wood. Next to food and clothing, he ranked the materials of human habitations. Timber is not indigenous in England. Our woods and forests fail to produce it in necessary abundance, and we are to a great degree dependent upon foreign countries for the amount which we require. The

\* G. R. Porter, Esq., F.R.S.

subject had been often discussed in Parliament; but on the 1st of June, 1835, another Select Committee was appointed to take into consideration the duties upon this article, and to report their observations to the House. The Committee met for the first time upon the 11th of the same month. Mr. Deacon Hume was the first witness examined. The limits of this volume, no less than the nature of the work, prevent our giving even an analysis of his valuable evidence. The following essay, in which the subject is treated in a very interesting manner, and with reference also to the entire body of evidence adduced before the Select Committee, was intended to find its way into quarters where blue-books are unread and commonly unknown. The privacy of the article without a name enabled the author to quote, as unostentatiously as he could desire, passages from his own evidence,\* in support of his views. The essay is one of the ablest, as well as one of the most valuable, of his productions.

#### TIMBER DUTIES—THE COLONIES. †

WE are about to examine a most grievous instance of the protective or bounty system. The Report of a Committee of the House of Commons has, once more, brought under the notice of the public, the colonial monopoly of the timber trade: and it will be our endeavour, with the aid of that Report, to analyze, dissect, and expound the character and

\* These passages we shall indicate by the initials J. D. H.

† Report from the Select Committee on Timber Duties, together with the minutes of evidence, ordered by the House of Commons to be printed 11th of August, 1835.

operation of that monopoly, in such manner as shall qualify our readers to form for themselves a clear and just opinion upon its merits.

In order to do this with the more effect, our course will be, —first : to give a description of the peculiar features of this monopoly, by which it is distinguishable from all others, and to exhibit an account of the *cost* of it to the country : and next : to investigate, separately, the cases of the two great parties or interests—the colonists and the ship-owners—for whose emolument this country is called upon to make those sacrifices of its revenue, of its commerce, and of its necessaries and comfort, which we shall describe.

The advocates of every case of bounty, or of protective duty—which is only bounty in another form—always profess to intend the public good. They stoutly disavow, as in decency they must, all attempt to serve particular parties at the expense of the country; and they insist, that whatever that apparent expense may be, which is the first consequence of the bounty, it is money which will soon be amply repaid through the secondary beneficial effects of the scheme. They assure us, that if the fostering hand of the State be extended to support the particular object of industry, in its infant efforts, either for origination or extension, it will afterwards go alone, and will thenceforth become and permanently remain, *one of the staple, profitable employments of the country*. As a caution to these eager caterers of national prosperity, it is not too much to demand of them the admission, that, in calling for such assistance to some new, or hitherto unsuccessful, occupation, they may, possibly, be mistaken in this prospect of its quality—that it *may* happen that it shall prove to be *not* so well adapted as they imagine, to the local or personal faculties of the country—and that, even under the assumption that their confidence in our ability to attain to the excellence they promise in the favourite trade to be well founded, they might still be desired to leave the industrious part of the community to determine for themselves the best sources of

profitable employment, and, what is of nearly equal importance, the best times for engaging in them.

Still it must be admitted, that in almost all the cases of bounty, or protection, the prospect of ultimate self-support, insisted upon by their first promoters, has been rationally probable, or at least possible. There may, no doubt, be cases wherein the forced application of skill and industry may prove to be competent to the task of removing or overcoming, in time, the original causes of the *higher* cost:—but there must also be cases in which the cause of that higher cost is of such a nature that it can never cease to operate.

If, with this distinction kept in mind, we examine the protection of the “Timber Duties,” it will stand exposed to view before us, the most overbearing, the most wasteful, the most useless, and the most hopeless of any that has ever been extended to any branch of industry. A plantation of sugar, in Jamaica, enjoys a physical equality with a rival plantation in Cuba. A farm in Essex has even a physical advantage over a farm in Poland. The spindle of the silk throwster and the shuttle of the weaver will obey the laws of rotatory or projectile force in England as well as in Italy or in France. But no power of man, no lapse of time, can equalise, for our use, the position of a forest on the Ottawa with that of a forest in Norway or Sweden.

When the protecting duty was first imposed, in 1810, upon European timber, there was not the pretence, or even the affectation of the pretence, of the commencement of a trade calculated to be permanent, and holding out the prospect of ultimate benefit as the compensation for a temporary sacrifice. It was not even considered to be a temporary sacrifice, but an immediate benefit. The mischief intended to be cured, was the matter which possessed the quality of temporariness. It was an expedient adopted under the pressure of a present difficulty, arising out of the peculiar occurrences of a state of war; and the encouraging of ships to go to Canada for timber, when it could not be got in the Baltic, was as much a *war*

*measure* as the charter of a fleet of transports to carry out or bring home a body of troops. All that was *temporary* about the measure, was its immediate utility; all that was *prospective*, pointed to its discontinuance. In short, its necessity was one of those evils of war, for the removal of which, men pray for the return of peace; and the arbitrary continuance of the evil without the necessity, after peace, for so many years, is an act of great cruelty on the suffering people, and not a whit more irrational than it would have been, to have gone on hiring transports, and sending them round the world, though they had no troops to carry.

In the years 1820 and 1821, committees of both the Lords and the Commons reported that no pledge for permanence or long duration was held out; and it was truly said by a witness (Q. 18) before the late committee, "*that the country was not to be doomed to dear timber for ever, because of the 'Copenhagen expedition.'*" \*

The great grievance of this monopoly is, the heavy cost of it upon the pockets of the people, without the compensating result of a commensurate increase of the revenue. The present duty upon a load of timber imported from the north of Europe is 2*l.* 15*s.* 0*d.* At the commencement of the war it was only 6*s.* 8*d.* This is an enormous increase of tax upon an article of first necessity: but as the whole amount of this sum, as far as it is received, goes to the national exchequer, and, *pro tanto*, precludes the necessity of some other tax, the consumer may be brought to pay it with cheerfulness. The justice, however, of this high duty assumes a very doubtful character in his mind, when he finds that if he purchase, of course at the same price, a load of timber imported from Canada, only 10*s.* of his money, instead of 55*s.*, which he equally pays, goes to the public revenue; and that the 45*s.* is nothing else than a perquisite he is compelled to give to certain individuals. He naturally inquires how it can be, that those individuals can establish such a right over his money:

\* J. D. H.

and is so far from finding in the origin of the charge any trace of such a right, that he discovers in its history the fact, that *his* benefit as a consumer under temporary difficulties, and not the benefit of the producer, was intended by the measure.

Q. 132.—“Are you not aware, from your official knowledge and experience, that the legislature, up to the present period, has always considered this great question as not merely a question of revenue, but as a mixed question, in which the revenue of the country, the colonial policy of the country, and the navigation of the country, have formed important ingredients?”—“I conceive there are few subjects on which the policy of the country has undergone more change than in regard to timber; the old policy, which I have before adverted to, was that of *supplying the country with timber* at the lowest possible rate, and having only a nominal duty upon it. Then the *Revenue System* was brought in, and all the duties imposed were decidedly for purposes of revenue. Then at another period the *obtaining a supply of timber for consumption* was allowed to supersede every other consideration; and, now, the measure intended for that purpose only, *is turned against the consumer, whom alone it was meant to serve*, and converted into a protective system for shipping and colonies, unnatural to both.” \*

The same witness is then asked (Q. 133), whether, in 1820 and 1821, it was not treated as a mixed question of revenue, colonial policy, and shipping? and he admits that it was so: but he also points out, that the committees of those years expected, from the measure they proposed, and which was adopted, a very different appropriation, to *those three interests*, of the benefits of the timber trade than that which has occurred. According to their intentions the revenue and the Baltic trade should have had larger shares.

The protecting duty had been 65s.; but still those committees, who treated the magnitude of the colonial imports as

\* J. D. H.

an evil, attributed what they deemed excess, partly to some temporary circumstances, and not entirely to the magnitude of the protection. In recommending a reduction of the protection to 45*s.*, while they expected the cessation of those circumstances to co-operate with the reduction, they evinced a belief, and a hope, that the north of Europe would, in future, participate much more largely in the trade than it had done; and that the revenue would be proportionately benefited. Indeed, every man who has any knowledge of the proceedings on the subject at that time must be aware, that the attention of Parliament and the public was then drawn to it, chiefly by the fact of the improper division of the trade, and the *excessive* portion of it which had been forcibly transferred from the old channel to the new one. Since it has been proved that the remedy thus applied has not only failed to correct the acknowledged evil, but has even suffered a great extension of it, the case is clear, that, even upon the principle of the measures then adopted, a new rule of division is called for. The reduction now prepared will still leave a protection of 30*s.* the load.

We now come to consider the cost to the public of this bounty-fed monopoly. At page 396 of the Report, Appendix X., is an analytical account of all the imports for the year 1833, which may be made the basis of calculations and estimates of various descriptions. From this it appears, that the quantity of firwood, computed in cubic contents, was, in that year, rather more than one million of loads. The great articles, fir-timber and deals, constituted 946,000 loads: and of these, 398,000 came from Europe, and 553,000 from the colonies. The actual revenue received upon the first and smaller quantity was a trifle more than 900,000*l.*; that from the second and larger quantity was not quite 230,000*l.* The duty upon the log from Europe is 55*s.* the load, on that from the colonies it is 10*s.*; and these sums were intended to be the basis of the duties on the deals also. In consequence, however, of an imperfection of the law, the deals are paying on

an average full 12s. the load less than is paid on the log; but as it is proposed by the committee, that this anomaly shall be corrected, we shall adopt those duties in our estimates as the effectual charges. It turns out also, that the imports, and particularly those from the colonies, were in 1834 much greater than those of 1833. We shall, therefore, also as a truer measure of the trade, proceed upon the assumption that we receive 400,000 loads of fir-timber and deals from Europe, and 600,000 loads from the colonies. The account would then stand thus:—

400,000 loads, at 55s. . . . .	£1,100,000
600,000 loads, at 10s. . . . .	300,000
	1,400,000
1,000,000 loads, at 55s. . . . .	£2,750,000

So that the loss to the revenue on the colonial timber is 1,350,000*l.*, or very nearly equal to the whole sum collected. This is the *prima facie* view of the calculation. It may be very true, as is asserted, that if we had only one uniform duty on timber from all parts, our drafts upon the nearer continental forests might have been so heavy as to have raised the prices there against us, and thereby have checked the consumption, and have prevented such a realization of revenue. But the controversy does not presuppose, nor is there the slightest probability, that an indiscriminating duty would have been fixed at anything like so high a rate as 55s., so that we might have secured our present amount of revenue under a rate of duty, which would have given the supply at a much lower price to the consumer than at present. One half the present high duty, if charged only on the present quantity, would give the present produce; and, therefore, the public pay, either in monopoly price, as distinguished from genuine commercial price, or in loss of revenue, the *other* half. This estimate applies to fir-timber and deals only; but if we include the duties on other descriptions of wood, and



also the high protecting duty on foreign staves, we are confident that we do not make an extravagant estimate of a round sum, when we say, that the country pays, in one way or the other, a million and a half a year, as the price of its present scheme of "wood duties."

In all considerations of *high* prices to the consumer, we must bear in mind the great distinction which exists between high *monopoly* price, high *duty* price (meaning duty for productive revenue), and high *commercial* price; and we ought particularly to do so here, because there is one line of argument in favour of the high duty on the European timber, much resorted to by the colonial and shipping party, which totally disregards this distinction; and, in doing so, betrays an extraordinary degree of either commercial ignorance, or *uncommercial* feeling.

The basis of this argument is, a desire, at whatever cost to ourselves, to deprive the foreign producer of his fair price; and it is vauntingly pressed into notice for the purpose of boasting that our present system has the merit of enabling us to buy our timber the cheaper on the Continent. Nobody can doubt that a high duty on an article, levied in a country where it would otherwise be largely consumed, must tend to lower the price of it at its source. But what a strange incoherent mixture of conflicting purposes, as well as contending parties, have we here. A high duty is imposed by *one* party, for the sole sake of its restrictive effect; and when the *other* party complains of the consequent high cost, he is answered by being told, that the operation of the duty is to keep down the price. The rejoinder is, that if the reduction of price be effective, the restriction is weakened; and if it be not effective, it is a nullity.

This is the most curious, see-saw argument we ever heard. A rational desire to render an article cheap, would imply a desire to obtain it, for its use, in abundance; but the mode employed for making Baltic timber cheap, is that of laying impediments in the way of the purchaser—a notable device

truly! The advantage of cheapness is to the consumer; therefore, to make the commodity cheap, prevent him from getting at it. Impound the goods in some almost inaccessible situation, till you have rendered its *local* value next to nothing, and then congratulate the persons who want it, upon its very low price!

This exquisite piece of commercial cunning seems to have been a favourite topic with some of the members of the Committee. Accordingly we find them in various parts of the evidence, pushing their examinations in a line calculated to elicit the merits of so delectable a scheme and contrivance.

Q. 8837.—“In your opinion, does not the existing arrangement of the duties on timber have the effect of keeping the British market supplied with every description of timber, European and Colonial, that is required by the public, and at moderate prices?”—“It does give the public that supply, and at moderate prices.”

Q. 3840.—“What do you mean by moderate prices?”—“I think, looking at the immensely increased consumption of this country, prices must be deemed exceedingly moderate.”

Q. 3844.—“You call those moderate prices when we are obliged to pay 50 per cent. more in price, and 100 per cent. more in freight?”—“Our consumption of colonial timber has so much increased, that it might have been expected that prices would be much higher than they are.”\*

To several questions on the same subject, a different witness answers in the following manner:—

Q. 58. “I think that the plan would raise the price of European timber abroad, insomuch that I should reckon on some loss of revenue from the reduction of consumption of European timber, and a commensurate revival of the colonial supply at the lesser duty.”—“I think that the price would be raised, and absorb part of the remitted duty. But the consumer need not care, because his foreign competitor would have to pay that price also.”—“I do not think that high

\* Mr. James Dowie.

prices affect this country, unless it be high *relative* prices; all we want is, that others shall not buy cheaper than we do; unless the greater price goes to the revenue, which must be provided for."—"We see that our consumption has much more than doubled against an increase of duty from 6*s.* 8*d.* to 55*s.*"—"If our old system had continued, I look upon it that timber would, by this time, have been an exceedingly dear article in Europe; and the colonies would have been secure of their market."—"We should have better timber for our money, and the price would be raised to foreigners. We ought never to have a cheap place behind us."—"I do not apprehend that foreign price would be made the cause of change: the wood ought to have its marketable value; and I do not consider that we should, in legislating, seek to bear down the marketable value; we should leave that to its natural course. We want only the right of going to the cheapest market."\*

The first of these two witnesses stated himself to be "a merchant engaged in the Canada trade;" and he, no doubt, thinks that the people of England pay him "very moderate prices" for Canada timber. We are very ready to agree with him that, under a duty of 55*s.* the load, on timber from its proper sources, the country might have been oppressed by much higher prices than they have been for that necessary article. But we are not at all disposed to take, as our present measure of the fitness of prices, those opinions to which the state of things some years ago gave rise. We reject all comparisons between *present* prices and *past* prices, and will look only to localities of price. The only proper comparisons, are those which are made between present prices *here* and present prices *elsewhere*; and no man shall tell us, that any price is "moderate" *here*, which is higher than it is in any *other place*, beyond that degree which is referable to the expense of bringing the article from that place, and to such duty upon it as is paid wholly to the revenue, in aid of the public

\* J. D. H.

finances of the State. Out of these limits, moderation of price, if there be moderation, is moderation of plunder.

There are two interests for whose benefit chiefly, and in whose name almost wholly, the British people are called upon to make the great sacrifices which we have been describing. These are the colonists and the ship-owners ; and we shall, therefore, enter into as full an examination of their respective cases as our limits will permit. By the term *colonists*, the public mean *emigrants* ; by the term *emigrants*, they mean *settlers* ; and by the term *settlers*, they mean *agricultural settlers*. What they do *not* mean by either term is, the great capitalists ; and, above all, the great merchants. It is very important that these distinctions should be well kept up ; for the truth is, that a deception is being practised upon the kind feelings of the people by parties who, conscious that their own pretensions would not be attended to, artfully thrust the cause of the *poor emigrant settlers* into the front of the battle, while, in the assumed character of philanthropists, they follow behind, and silently gather all the spoils.

The emigrants who wish to become agricultural settlers may be divided into three classes. First, our own small farmers or country-bred people, who, despairing of the means of supporting their families in comfort by their occupations in this country, gather together their little capitals, intending to settle themselves upon farms of their own in the new world : next, our industrious labourers, who, by unabated toil and painful abstinence from the comforts of life, are enabled to start, with their modicums of savings, for the same object, in a humbler degree : and last, the poor and almost destitute ablebodied men, just contriving—perhaps chiefly by charitable aid—to clear their passage out. The first of these become at once capital farmers. The second are able also to sit down upon their allotments ; some wholly, others only partly masters of their own time and labour, according to the various degrees of the strength of their little purses. The last must be content to work entirely for the first class for a few years,

during which it is in their power to make in the colony that purse, which they were unable to carry with them from home.

The most interesting view taken by the people of England of emigration to our northern colonies, is that which exhibits the cases of these classes of persons; and, accordingly great pains are taken to represent the timber trade as an important auxiliary to the agricultural pursuits. Farming and lumbering are declared to be occupations which unite and alternate most conveniently and advantageously with each other.

One of the most common errors upon this subject, into which the people are apt to fall, from want of specific information, is that which supposes the settler to find, in the export of timber to this country, a ready market for the trees growing upon his own piece of the wilderness. The wood upon it is spoken of as a sort of first crop to him, the proceeds of which are to cover the expenses of clearing the land, and preparing it for the crops which are to follow.

“ Q. 94.—Is it not a fact that the timber, being the first produce of the soil in a waste or natural state, is the first object to which the settler looks for reimbursement from his immediate labour? ”—“ I understand certainly not; very little timber comes from the grounds taken possession of by the settlers.” \*

Nature has refused the settler this piece of good fortune, having decreed that the districts which alone are worth the care of the cultivator, are those in which the pine is rarely seen. It may be safely asserted, that not one fir-tree in five hundred imported into England is cut from the land of a settler.

But the advocates of the trade, when beaten from this ground, still cling to the interesting case of the poor emigrant settler, and make it furnish a second string to their bow. They will admit, when compelled, that the farming settler has no

\* J. D. H.

saleable wood on his own land, or perhaps even in his own district; but then they will say, that there is abundance in other parts, upon which he may advantageously employ himself, insisting, as they do, that he stands in actual need of other employment than that which his land affords; and asserting, that the business of lumbering supplies him most opportunely with that employment, as a peculiarly apposite auxiliary to the business of farming.

This description of the case of the agricultural settler is as unfounded as the former. Not only is the wood he finds upon his land valueless in the market—but also he, of all the farmers in the world, is the last to want employment off his own farm.

The well known difficulty of finding winter work in this country for a portion of the agricultural labourers gives a plausibility to the assertion, that such is the case in Canada and New Brunswick. But it is not so: it is in truth the very reverse; for the peculiarity of the situation of the settler on his lot of land in our northern colonies, is, that he has more work proper to the winter than to the summer. This will be readily perceived, when his case is understood.

Having, at the approach of winter, built his log-house, made his domestic arrangements, and set himself down upon his hundred acres of primeval forest, he commences the clearance of one, two, or three acres of it, according to the strength of himself and family, or of the means he has of commanding the labour of others. The first process is to cut the trees down at about two feet from the ground, or higher if the snow is deep, leaving the stumps and the roots to be stocked up some years afterwards, when their decayed state will render the work more easy, and his leisure will be greater. Having selected and set apart such of the felled wood as may be required for his own use, he places the rest in large piles and burns them, and spreads the ashes over the ground in the spring, early enough for the sowing of his corn, the setting of his potatoes, and the putting in of a few

garden seeds, particularly those of the great favourite, the pumpkin.

The trees being of the deciduous kind, and the ground having been at all times covered with them, there is a surface soil so deep, of light vegetable matter, and, for the most part, so clear of weeds and bushes, that the seed is easily raked in by hand, and without the previous process of ploughing, or the aid of draught cattle. Generally a second corn crop, and often a third, is obtained by manual labour; but, if the means of such assistance be at hand, the ground is routed up a little, with a sort of plough, drawn by an ox, in the parts least interrupted by the stumps of the trees. With the last of these corn crops grass seeds are sown, and the piece is kept for hay or pasture, while the stumps and roots of the trees are becoming decayed, so as to be easily removed. Every winter gives its fresh piece of cleared ground for corn; and, as the pieces of grass accumulate, there is in a few years a breadth of land laid down, sufficient for summer's pasture and winter's fodder. Then comes the cow, and the pig, and the poultry; and our settler is finding his comforts increasing about him, and sees his looked-for independence established.

There is something in this system peculiarly advantageous to a labourer, who has acquired the means of supporting himself till he has harvested his first crop. He can go on for many years, without the necessity of draught cattle: his new clearing is, as it were, his fallow of the year, not his crop of trees, as erroneously supposed, or falsely asserted; and his crops of corn and grass, follow in regular succession, as a course of crops succeed a real fallow in the cultivation of old land.

When he has cleared as much land as suits his plans, he has the same ground to go over again, for the removal of the stumps, and for bringing into tillage his earliest pieces of grass. These, to be sure, are not employments for the dead of winter, but he must now have been for some years settled on his farm, and have become far too independent elsewhere,

to engage in any work so arduous, and so destructive of domestic life, as that of the lumberer. If his original stock of money be too small to enable him, in the first year or two, to devote *all* his labour to his own land, he works in part on the lands of more fortunate neighbours, and submits, with the patience that poverty prescribes, to postpone a little the independence which the perfecting of his farm is eventually to secure him.

No two avocations can be more incongruous than that of the agricultural settler and of the lumberer. By far the greatest part of the timber for exportation is cut in forests, many hundred miles up the great rivers, and far from the agricultural districts; and the farming man, who attaches himself to a gang of lumberers, must totally leave his home for many months. And what will he return to—where will be his fresh piece of clearing—of what use to him, as a farmer, will be his spring and summer, after a winter so spent?

Here then we have dispelled two delusions. We have shown that the agricultural settler is *not* a seller of timber from his own land: and that he not only does *not* need the timber trade, as an auxiliary employment, but that it is utterly incompatible with, and destructive of, his proper employment, as a farmer. If these two simple truths could be made generally known, very many persons, who are induced to advocate the timber monopoly, would be detached from its cause.

We have thus far described these settlers rather as what they all should be, than what, in all cases, they are. Our description of them would be true, almost without exception, were it not for the baneful temptations to which they are exposed, by the presence of an adventitious trade thrust upon their country by the force of extravagant bounties received by very different parties.

Of the three classes of settlers we have been describing, the first—that of the farmers in good circumstances—is the



one which has to lament the most pitiable, if not the most numerous of its victims to the timber trade. These are the persons whom the great mercantile houses in the trade have raised into the position of the middle men, the necessary instruments of their speculations. When we look around us at home, and see with what eagerness, in this old and experienced country, replete with multifarious avocations, numbers are induced to engage in newly-projected adventures, can we wonder that the exhibition of the English tariff of wood duties to the simple settlers in our North American colonies, and the offer of a loan of money, should enable the great speculators, alluded to above, to inspire many a thriving farmer with the belief that he saw in those duties the prospect and promise of his future fortune. The relations of these little farmers to the great merchants may be very well illustrated, by referring to those between the little publicans and the great brewers in this metropolis, where the brewer gave credit, the merchant lent money, and each equally protected himself by securities, taking priority over all other claimants. The Canadian farmer, adding to the merchant's tempting loan all his own savings, and availing himself of all the credit he possessed in the country to increase his effective capital, erected his saw-mill, hired his gang of lumberers, took his share of the treacherous contracts, and embarked himself, his family, and his fate in the timber trade. Foreclosures of mortgages and sales of farms have attended the usual windings-up of the affairs of these misguided men. The great and prior creditor becomes possessed of the real property upon easy terms ; and, like his prototype the great brewer, soon finds a fresh adventurer ready to perform, for a few years, the part of his reckless predecessor. All these sufferers have now before their eyes the evidence of their error, in the continuing prosperity of such of their friends and neighbours as had not yielded to the same temptation. Will the good people of England, we ask, consent to be heavily taxed on one of the first necessities of life, for the sake of

producing such consequences as these to the parties whom they mean to serve? Will they sacrifice their own money, and immolate these people, to the moloch of a few great firms of mercantile houses in the colonies?

The lower and labouring classes of the settlers and emigrants are, in their station, equally drawn from good into evil, by the allurements of the timber trade, the curse of their elected country. We have already shown that the man who can support himself, even in part, while he works, though only in part, upon his own ground, destroys all his best prospects, if he leaves that ground to join the gangs of lumberers. And the man who crosses the Atlantic with nothing but his "stalwart limbs"—had far better fix himself in an agricultural district, or go upon some of the public works, than betake himself to lumbering. We were once told by the late Colonel By, of the Engineers, who made the Rideau canal, that many of his men saved enough, out of the earnings of one year's work, to settle them in their little farms: and that no man, who was intent upon the object, failed to effect it in two years. The habits acquired in lumbering tend to the squandering rather than the saving of money, and unfit even the careful individual for the monotony of a fixed residence, and a steady local employment. But the man who accumulates his little capital while working for a farmer, acquires, at the same time, both the habits and the practical knowledge which are to make that capital of double value to him.

It will here be asked, if all go to farming, who are to be the customers for the corn, and other produce? We feel that this is a serious question, and shall enter upon it presently: but, following up the train of observations we are upon, we shall examine it now only with reference to the supposition, that if the colonial timber trade should be materially reduced, there might be a want of employment in the colonies for that portion of our own labouring people who are destitute here, solely because they are in excess; and who are therefore assisted to emigrate with the view of reducing our population.

down to the home-employment point. For the sake of argument, we will concede that emigration is the outlet for clearing our workhouses at home. But then we shall ask—do we not mean thereby to get the paupers off our hands? Do we not expect that we are removing them from a place where they are supported without work because there is no demand for their labour, to a place where their labour is wanted, and will support them? Certainly it is under this impression that efforts are made to assist able-bodied paupers to emigrate to Canada; and the well-meaning part of the community are induced to join the interested advocates of our system of timber duties.

But what would these well-intentioned persons say, if they found that, so far from the country's getting the surplus labourers off its hands, we are only moving the workhouse from England to the Ottawa; and remitting thither, or wasting, for the keeping up of that workhouse, ten times as much money as it would have cost us at home. Taking this case by itself, and it is a distinct question, it is a very plain case. The country gives a bounty of 45s. for every load of timber imported from Canada; if then our expatriated labourers find work in Canada, *only* because that bounty is given, the person who votes for the continuance of that bounty, *only* for the sake of those labourers, is making the worst bargain that ever was heard of. He cannot fail to perceive that an exceedingly small portion of the 45s. falls to those labourers, and that, consequently, by keeping them at home he would save the difference. There never was so absurd an idea as that which supposes that our pauper emigrants are off our charge, while we are sending them to parts at which natural employments, furnishing their own returns, cannot be found for them; but where, in the want of such employments, we are creating artificial employments for them at very heavy cost to ourselves.

We now come to the inquiry which a little above we postponed—namely, what must be the state of a country where all are growers of corn, and where there is no adventitious

employment supporting a superadded population, to be, as to corn, consumers only? This, with respect to our North American colonies is, we have said, a serious question; unless their facilities for growing corn be such as to secure them an advantageous market in exportation. If they have that market, the question is satisfactorily answered. If they have it not, and at the same time they can find no other article for exportation, then, indeed, although they may preserve existence, it will be a very uncomfortable existence, because, under such an hypothesis, they cannot command the products of other countries, except only in the most limited degree. A people so circumstanced would, from necessity, force a sale abroad of some *small* quantity of their corn, which, though they stinted themselves of food by so doing, they would consent, nevertheless, to exchange for a *small* quantity of those other necessaries of life which they could not make for themselves, and without which they would hardly live.

Now this is just the predicament in which it is asserted by the advocates of the timber trade, that the colonies would be, if this country should not consent to continue paying those large bounties on their timber, by the force of which alone they are said to be furnished with an exportable article in return for European manufactures. But this case, no doubt, is greatly over-stated.

In the first place, we do not believe that the climate and soil—both or either—are so unfavourable to agriculture as that the labour of a man, for that is the hypothesis, will barely produce his own food. The history of the colonies is opposed to such a supposition. The Canadians were making great progress long before the year 1810, and before a timber trade to England was thought of; and yet the place of their location in Lower Canada is by no means to be compared, in respect of climate, or even soil, with the more recent settlements in Upper Canada. Every man really acquainted with that part of the world knows, that the soil and climate of British North America, from the settlements on the north-west

side of the St. Lawrence, and along the Ottawa, westward, to Lake Huron; and southward, to the Lakes Erie and Ontario; and again, to the American frontier of New Brunswick, as far as the river St. Croix, will, with common cultivation, yield and ripen, in great perfection, and in full quantity, all the corn, vegetables, and fruits, grown in England, and even some others, especially Indian corn. In such a country, with land, the fee-simple of which would be a very low rent for it in England, and where trifling taxes cover all the public expense of the state—where there are no tithes, no poor-rates—how can there be a difficulty to the production of a quantity of corn beyond the consumption of the producers, giving *some* surplus to exchange for *some* supply of those manufactures, which are, of course, produced cheaper and better in the old countries of Europe.

We must here dwell for a moment, to remind our readers that there is no intention of annihilating this timber trade; but only to reduce a small portion of the immoderate bounty by which it has been driven to a most unwholesome state of excess. Again, it must be remembered that there is such a place as the British West Indies, which, although a little nearer the United States than Canada, is, unlike England, much farther off from the Baltic.

It was stated in the evidence that one-half of the timber trade of the colonies is for the British market; one-fourth for the West India market, and one-fourth for their own use. If, therefore, the British trade should be reduced by one-fourth, by throwing out a quantity of rubbish, the whole of their favourite occupation would only be lessened by one-eighth. The recommendation of the committee to reduce the duty on European wood from 55*s.* to 40*s.* the load, will apply only to the log, which is about one-fourth of the whole quantity, as the deals are, in fact, paying only about 42*s.* the load, and they constitute the other three-fourths. The average duty collected on European deals and timber together, is found to be 45*s.* 10*d.*; so that if both be charged 40*s.* the protection,

which now gives the colonies three-fifths of our wood trade, will be reduced by only the trifling difference of 5s. 10d.; and if this view of the average be rejected, then the answer is, that the protection to the deals, the most important branch, is scarcely touched.

But those who object to any change declare, that even a small reduction of the protective duty will go far to exclude the timber from this market, *and that the colonies really have no other article of export*; just as Newfoundland has none but fish. Then we will try the question upon this issue, and see whether, admitting the fact, it is proper that the British people should pay a million and a half a year, in order that the inhabitants of some distant, inhospitable, unproductive soil and climate, may be able to export wood or stone, or some such wild gift of nature, to the amount of, perhaps, a hundred thousand pounds, for the purchase of foreign commodities. We allow here a very large sum as the clear gain of the colonies necessary to enable the agricultural settler to obtain foreign supplies; because, in this estimate, the gains of every man, besides the settler, constitute a charge to be deducted from the gross amount.

A member of the committee seems to have taken some trouble to show that the province of New Brunswick was in this state of worthlessness.

Q. 96.—“Is it not, in fact, almost the only trade carried on by the provinces of New Brunswick with the mother country?”—“I imagine it must be, for I know they import their flour and pork from the United States, which shows how much they neglect agriculture.”

Q. 106.—“What other means do the colonists of New Brunswick possess of making returns to this country for the manufactures sent them but the lumber trade?”—“I presume that they contemplate agriculture.”

Q. 107.—“You mean prospectively?”—“The emigrants are supposed to go there to settle for agricultural purposes. To the fresh men it is prospective: but those who preceded them

might by this time have produced corn enough for their home market; but they are still fed by the United States." \* \*

Q. 108.—“You have stated, from your knowledge, that they import their corn at present; do they now possess any other means for making returns to this country for the manufactured goods sent them but the timber trade?”—“I am not aware, except ashes, perhaps, and not even that in New Brunswick.”

Q. 109.—“The export trade in New Brunswick is confined at present to the export of timber to this country: is it not?”—“I fear that is but too true; but considering that the trade is supported by the protection of 45*s.* a load, and that not, perhaps, more than 2*s.* of that 45*s.* goes to the settler as the value of the tree, and that out of the 2*s.* he has to buy his flour of the United States, his share of the manufactures, which are the returns for the timber to New Brunswick, must be very small.”\*

Q. 110.—“What, in your opinion, would be its effect on the support of the emigrant population going there, in the present incipient state of agriculture?”—“It would prevent his being diverted from agriculture, which ought not at this day to be incipient in New Brunswick. We should hardly pay 45*s.* a load on our timber to put a man in New Brunswick in the way of living upon American corn with 2*s.* of it.”†

Had the object of this member of the committee been to have exhibited our connection with New Brunswick as altogether ruinous, and had he intended to have followed up his exposure of its character with a proposal for abandoning the colony, he could not have chosen a better course than that which he pursued, for the purpose of laying the foundation of such a proposal.

Now this is the very point to which we are coming, and we do unhesitatingly assert, that if the accounts given of this timber trade by its advocates are true, so far are those accounts from furnishing reasons for continuing it by means

\* J. D. H.

† J. D. H.

of the present enormous bounty, that they must lead every rational man to turn round and declare that our only course is to make the best retreat out of it that we can; and to begin immediately to take measures for its early and final abandonment.

As the tempting bait of a "market for our manufactures" is thrown out in the examination we have been quoting, we must give a few extracts from the evidence of another witness, evidently of different sentiments from the last quoted, on this subject of protection, and of *mutual* trade.

Q. 2386.—"At what do you estimate the protection given to British manufactures?"—"It varies from  $7\frac{1}{2}$  to 30 per cent."

Q. 2387.—"What do you call the shipping price of the principal export of New Brunswick; namely, yellow piece timber?"—"About 20s."

Q. 2388.—"The protection given in respect of duty to American timber is 45s., is it not?"—"It is."

Q. 2389.—"That is 225 per cent., is it not?"—As it is computed in the question now put, certainly."

Q. 2390.—"You think that 225 per cent. protection upon colonial timber is only a fair equivalent for the  $7\frac{1}{2}$  to 30 per cent. protection upon British manufactures?"—"I do."

Q. 2391.—"Will you explain how you arrive at that conclusion?"—"I conceive that neither 30 per cent. nor 225 per cent. is of any value in the present case, as far as numbers are concerned, for there is no magic in 30 or 225, but that the object is to get an adequate protection—such a protection as will ensure the two countries dealing with each other. . . . What is required in justice to both parties is an adequate protection."\*

Being afterwards pressed *hard-up* with the question, whether he would give 500 per cent. he fairly states, that the *right* sum is that which is *enough*. In another part (Q. 2256), we find this gentleman stating, with great delight, that the

\* Henry Bliss, Esq.



lumberers will "give so high as 10*l.* a ton for hay." Hear that, O ye landed interest! and when you have occasion to build, or to repair buildings, with timber paying 55*s.* a load duty instead of 6*s.* 8*d.*, as it did before the war, bear in mind, that in paying that enormous tax, you are enabling a brother farmer in Canada to get 10*l.* a ton for his hay; and, perhaps, this brother farmer is some man, for whose passage you had once burdened your poor rates, in order to avoid the future cost of maintaining him as an able-bodied pauper at home!

At another time this gentleman is asked how it should happen that a saw-mill, which in Norway would cost only 40*l.*, is valued in New Brunswick at 1,000*l.*? "Oh," says he, "you forget the value of the water-power." Only think, what a water-power in a wilderness must be worth, for sawing deals for a bounty of 45*s.* the load! And he is not the only witness who has let us into this secret of the manner of estimating the capital in saw-mills. Well might Mr. Montgomery Martin give two millions as the valuation, as intimated in one of the questions on this subject (Q. 92), if he included the value of the natural waterfalls. We wonder at how much per horse-power he appraises the "goodwill" of a river in North America. Oh! for a Rennie or a Telford, to compute us the value of the Falls of the Niagara. Manchester, Leeds, and Glasgow, are you sleeping, that you do not secure the moving powers of the Niagara, while they are yet to be had, and before your coals begin to fail?

But besides their extravagant accounts of the saw-mills, we have from some of the witnesses the most lively and graphic representations of the scenes of business, and bustle, and active employment, on the rivers, and in the timber coves, and at the quays, and in the shipping ports and towns adjacent, as the consequences of our timber duties. And so much the worse, say we who have to pay for it all. But how can it be otherwise? Six hundred thousand loads of wood cannot be got together, and hewed and squared into logs, or sawed into boards, for shipment, without the employment of

many hands, and those hands acting subordinately to a variety of masters in different branches of the business. To an ordinary observer, there would be no difference between the cheerful active industry of the well-paid people he would see about him, in the shipping season, at Quebec, and those whom, at some other occasion, he had witnessed at one of our own thriving ports or manufacturing towns. But under all this seeming similarity, how immense the difference between the two cases, just the difference between *spending* money and *getting* money. Both excellent in their way, provided the distinction be kept in view: but to mistake spending for getting, would soon make bankrupt of the *trade which had not the public pocket to draw upon*. We can find plenty of examples of prodigal expenditure very profitable to the persons employed, without crossing the Atlantic to seek for them. Let us, for instance, match Newmarket in the Easter meeting against Quebec in the shipping season. In the place of hewers and sawyers, and raftsmen and lumberers, we have only to suppose trainers, and jockeys, and ostlers, and innkeepers; the timber coves and wharfs, are the training stables and the hotels; and the shipping may be represented by stage-coaches and post-chaises-and-four in abundance. In the case of Newmarket, all is acknowledged expenditure, but with the pleasures of the race in return. If the people of England are amateur timber-cutters in imagination, well and good—they, then, have their return like the visitors to Newmarket, but not else; and of this our readers may rest assured, that if the country did not possess that redundant opulence, out of which such places as Newmarket, Brighton, and many more are supported, it could not amuse itself with *gentleman* saw-mills and timber coves in Canada. Away, then, with all this fulsome description of the business and activity produced by this ruinous occupation in the colonies; and say at once, that they are out poor-houses to England, whose able-bodied paupers are *there* “digging holes one day to fill them up the next,” in order to keep them from idleness *here*. We wish

that the practice were a little closer to the analogy than it is; for instead of "filling up the hole again" we incur an additional expense in uselessly carting the earth to a great distance. Let us suppose the timber felled, rafted down, hewed or sawed, and on the wharf ready for shipment, with all the charges for these operations cleared and paid—and then, instead of sending ships to bring it away, the most economical thing we could do would be, to burn it on the spot, and send the workmen back to prepare another quantity, to make another bonfire the next season. And we might propose the same end at home for the ships—half of which, before they are fitted out for the voyage, are hardly worth the bounty on the cargoes they will bring back; and their crews are really wanted for the Navy.

In the foregoing examination of the case of the colonists, and particularly of the agricultural settler, we have carefully avoided to blend the case of the ship-owners, whose charges for freight form no part of the colonist's profit, but are a burden upon him. We will not allow the colonist to plead the case of the ship-owner, except incidentally, when desiring for his own sake an increase of his bounty, in order to enable him to pay the heavy freight of his timber, without which he will not be able to forward it to our market. The magnitude of those freights is his grievance, and it would perhaps alleviate that grievance, if he were allowed to employ foreign ships as well as British ships. It is very true that, as the matter stands, the two parties find it their interest to combine, in the present matter, for the sake of the common plunder of a third party; but remove the object of that plunder, and the two interests are natural enemies; the supplier of the distant article of merchandise must, on the one hand, desire the cheapest possible freight for it; and, on the other hand, the ship-owner must be anxious to procure, on the best possible terms, every commodity which is necessary to his particular trade; he will go any distance, with pleasure, to fetch timber for other people at a remunerating freight; but when

he wants timber for himself, he will wish to have the liberty of going to the nearest place for it.

The third party, the plunder of whom reconciles these two naturally conflicting parties, is the general consumer of timber; to him, the extra freight of the longer voyage is sheer waste; and the question is, whether it is not waste to the country also. We think that it is an expenditure decidedly wasteful to the nation, and such as cannot be justified upon any trading or commercial principles: we utterly repudiate the political economy which pretends to show the national advantage of giving two pounds to a fellow subject, instead of one pound to a foreigner, for the same article or service. The man who actually pockets the additional pound is the only fellow-subject who is personally benefited; the country loses by the transaction; particular profits to individuals may come readily enough out of waste, but national profit never.

But there are exertions and expenditures, the *proper returns* for which are not pecuniary profits. The loss of time and money attending the regulations of quarantine, subtract much from the profits of some commercial adventures, and raise the prices of the merchandise; but they yield benefits, in the health of the people, which are deemed to be ample equivalents for the cost. The *necessity* of their charge is deemed a grievance, and no one ever thought of proposing to put *all ships* under quarantine as a lucrative proceeding, because the money was spent in the country. In like manner it may possibly be the fact, that the naval strength of the country should require a large portion of our mercantile marine to be employed in some peculiar trades, although upon wasteful voyages, which bring great mercantile loss upon the public. But we deny that this plea is available for the defence of the Canada timber trade; we totally repudiate the belief, that the legitimate profitable trades of this great commercial country are not *adequate to all the purposes for*

*which the navy of the state seeks its resources in a mercantile marine.*

According to the representations constantly made by the ship-owners, the peculiar value or utility of the timber trade to them is, its fitness, as far as it goes, for the reception of their old and degraded ships: and so much do they treat it, on this account, as the most important branch of their business, that all persons who, during the last fourteen or fifteen years, have had their attention drawn to the proceedings of the shipping interest, are well aware of the curious fact, that every complaint of that body—let it begin at what branch of the question it may—always winds up with the cuckoo song of the timber trade, and its insufficiency, of late years, to find employment for the cast ships of their other trades.

There can be no doubt that it is a beneficial thing to possess a trade in which our merchant vessels may be able to earn a few freights between the time when they have ceased to be fit "to carry dry cargoes," and the time of their being broken up. Nobody will deny this: but then it is *one* thing to have such a trade falling naturally to us, and *another* to create such a trade by force, and at the cost of five times its value. The freest possible admission of its importance does not justify the purchase of it at a most excessive price; much less, after that price has been given, will it justify the discontent at its *quantity*, so clamorously and indecently put forth by the ship-owners. The true questions at issue are—first, whether there is not a very large quantity of this trade; second, whether the present quantity does not greatly exceed that of former times; and, third, whether, if it prove that *that* quantity has been enormously increased, and yet is insufficient for its present purposes, the cause of the defect does not lie in the false measures of the ship-owners, and in their mismanagement of their business in some matters which operate upon the case, and at the same time rest entirely with themselves.

Previous to the war, and for the greater part of it, our import of fir wood, in various forms, may be taken at about 400,000 loads a year. It is now much more than 1,000,000 loads. At the former period, the whole came from the north of Europe, and about half the carriage, or 200,000 loads, was in British ships. The European trade stands now much in the same position, both as to extent, and as to participation of carriage; and the additional 600,000 loads come from the colonies. Now, it is admitted on all hands, that one voyage to America is equivalent to two to the Baltic; so that, in estimating the quantity of the timber trade with reference to the carrying trade, the ship-owners of the present day have 1,400,000 loads—that is 600,000 colonial wood counted twice and 200,000 European—where their predecessors had only the last mentioned 200,000. Here, then, is an increase in the proportion of fourteen to two. Our general shipping and carrying trade has not increased in this proportion, nor anything in the remotest degree approaching it. Deducting the timber at both periods, the other trades have not been doubled, so that we have of the timber trade a quantity equal to fourteen, where four would have preserved the accustomed proportion. That is to say—if the timber trade was formerly to the general trade as one to five, it is now as seven to ten.

It has been observed above, that the peculiar value of the timber carrying trade consisted in its fitness for the employment of ships after they had become disqualified for the carrying of superior descriptions of goods; the question therefore, why such a superior trade, which has been only doubled, cannot find a sufficient receptacle for its cast ships in such an inferior trade, which has increased sevenfold, leads immediately to the further question—why does that superior trade cast so many ships?

Two remedial measures lately, and far too tardily, adopted, furnish from their histories the best answers to this question. We allude first to the Act of 1834, for correcting the former

erroneous mode of measuring ships for their tonnage; and next to the new and improved system established at "Lloyd's" for registering the qualification of the merchant vessels, as the guide to the underwriters by which they may determine the premium of insurance in every case.

The old rule of admeasurement would give the true tonnage of a well-proportioned ship, by taking some only of the dimensions necessary to the computation, and assuming the other dimensions from them. It was, consequently, in the power of the builder to falsify these assumptions, by contracting the ship as much as he chose in the parts which were to be measured, and extending her in the other parts; and he had a great temptation to adopt this course, because the measured tonnage, and not the real capacity of the ship, is the ground of charge for all duties and port dues. The symmetry of the ship, and all those good properties which depend upon correctness of form, were thus destroyed; and it will be readily conceived, that such a ship must be less able to contend with the dangers of the seas than a well-formed ship, and must, consequently, be subjected to a premature old age.

About fifteen years ago, a commission of scientific men was appointed, to determine on a mode of measurement which should get at the actual capacity of the ship, let her form be what it may. Such a plan was accordingly suggested in their report; and Mr. Huskisson did all that lay in his power to induce the ship-owners to consent to its adoption. He introduced it into a bill, then in the House of Commons, for the registering of British ships; but he had not the nerve to persevere under the clamour which was raised against it, and he withdrew the clause. The violence of the opposition came from the owners of the worst-built ships. In the session of 1834, Mr. Poulett Thomson was enabled to carry through Parliament the Act to which we have alluded: but the long postponement of this remedy of great and glaring evils was the act of the ship-owners themselves.

There is no doubt that the bad symmetry of our merchant

vessels is one of the faults of our naval architecture, which make it impossible for our ships to retain for many years their station in the superior classes. The other cause of degradation, to which we have already referred, is of much more powerful operation. To some of our readers the plan and principle of "Lloyd's Registry" are familiar: to others, the very term will be unknown, and therefore we shall make them acquainted with the subject, which we have, as yet, only introduced, by saying that it is a registry of the qualification of merchant ships kept at Lloyd's Coffee-house, the great mart of marine insurance, as the guide to the underwriters.

In this registry the vessels are marshalled in certain classes under certain established symbolical designations—such as A. 1.—E. 1., and other combinations of letters and numbers; and the premiums of insurance applicable to different vessels, engaged in the same season upon the same voyage, vary in their amount according to the classes in which they are respectively registered. The ship in a lower class must yield to the merchant, out of the freight on his goods, the excess of premium to which he is thus subjected; and this reduction is, in many cases, so destructive of all profit as to exclude the lower classes from the superior branches of trade.

The information *intended* to be given by this registry is of the merits of the ship—the quality of her build—the state of her repairs, and all other points of her condition by which a judgment may be formed of the greater or less degree of average probability, that she will arrive at the end of her voyage. To furnish such information an accurate knowledge of the existing state of the ship is necessary; and as this can only be obtained by frequent surveys, a body of able, confidential, and well-paid officers are requisite for that service. It is not enough to say, that the shipowners have, till lately, refused to incur the expense of such an establishment; *expense* was not the only objection; for its formation was also retarded by the opposition of parties among them,



who, as is the case in all trades, had found a method of working the mischief to their own peculiar advantage. In defect of such actual knowledge, the registrar proceeded upon certain assumptions ; and, according as the circumstances and history of the ship furnished the criterions for those assumptions, she was placed in a *higher* or in a *lower* class. The chief criterion was age ; and for the purpose of keeping on the safe side, a very low age was adopted. The rule was inexorable ; and, at the end of the term assigned, the good sound ship was as certainly degraded as the ship whose timbers would hardly hold together till her allotted time had expired. The first consequence of such a rule was, that men built ships as they would build houses upon short ground leases ; and the reason for not incurring the cost of substantial repairs, as the term wore away, was as strong in the one case as in the other. Besides, ships so built are less susceptible of beneficial repairs than they would have been if the builders, at the time of their original construction, had acted under a different expectation.

Through the operation of such a system as this, the upper classes of ships were perpetually overflowing, in rapid succession, into the classes below them ; and creating an excess of the lowest grade, which could obtain no relief from the glut except in the yards of the ship-breaker. The demand for first-class ships for the superior trades was not lessened by these absurd reductions of their particular numbers ; and thus a large quantity of new-built ships, not wanted in the aggregate, was annually forced into existence by the necessity of supplying that demand.

The number of ships built since the war, computed in tonnage, form a total very nearly equal to our whole mercantile marine at this day, unduly enlarged as it is by the system we are discussing. Yet it must have happened, from the nature of the war, that the peace commenced with a surplus. Assisted by a decreement which requires a total renovation in about twenty years, it is clear that nothing but a

little patience and forbearance on the part of the trade is ever wanting, to let the undue number die off, and thus to remove the evils of an incidental excess. By their own miserable management, however, this forbearance from building fresh ships was rendered *impossible*;—the “prudential check” could not be applied; and the trade was kept in a perpetual state of hopeless redundancy, which even its “vice and misery” could not keep down. The “timber bounty” has been to the alms-begging shipowners what the “allowance system” was to far more pardonable paupers, and the analogy is as strong in the remedy as in the evil. An efficient “Lloyd’s Registry” is at last established, and we have the most sanguine expectations of its beneficial consequences.

It was observed by one of the witnesses before the Committee, (Q. 129) “We possess iron and coals, and we have not got wood; our case would be complete with the three. We act towards *wood* as France acts towards *iron*.”\* To whom, we ask, is the possession of wood of more importance than the shipping interest? Here, then, is another part of their noxious scheme of self-aggrandisement, at the expense of the best interests of the country, and even re-acting against themselves in no small degree. They compare in their minds the *one* benefit of good and cheap timber to themselves, with the *other* benefit to themselves of a long carriage of bad and dear timber; and they submit to the evil of building bad ships at a great price, instead of good ones at a low price, rather than take their fair chance, with the country at large, in the benefits of a full development of its natural energies.

Now let us for a moment suppose that we had, after the necessity of the deviation had ceased, reverted to our older policy, of giving the country foreign timber upon the best terms, in addition to its indigenous productions of coal and iron;—that our rule for taking the tonnage of vessels had never held out a temptation to spoil their form;—and, also, that the manner of conducting marine insurance had been

\* J. D. H.

such, as to induce every man first to employ the best materials and the best workmanship in the building of his vessel; and afterwards, to preserve her condition as long as he could, by means of the most effectual repairs. Let us, we say, set these considerations on one side of the question; and, on the other, the postponement, till it was wanted, of the colonial wood-trade. It is clear that the shipowners, for their own good alone, have taken the worst course of the two. They have certainly, by that which they have pursued, greatly enhanced the difficulties of competing with their foreign rivals in other trades. The waste of shipping must throw a heavy loss on some party; and in whatever degree the shipowners are exposed to foreign competition they are, in that degree, balked of their design that it should fall on the people. The magnitude of this waste must enhance the cost of insurance, and thus fall back upon the shipowners; while the excessive quantity of ships annually built, must greatly encourage competition among themselves.

Increased as the difficulty in competing with foreigners is by their own bad system, still the quantity of the carrying trade, in which they are exposed to it, is comparatively small. The coasting trade is entirely their own. In the colonial trade, and in all voyages between British port and British port, in almost all parts of the world, there is no foreign interference; and a very large portion of our trade with foreigners, is with countries having no shipping, and from which the ships of other foreign countries are excluded. The Norway trade (which, on account of the shortness of the voyages, is not of much value) the British ships never had to any extent. They have all along stood their ground well with the Swedes; and the Prussians, after a hard struggle, are beginning to yield. The shipping of Prussia is on the decline. The Russian ships have never stood any chance against the British; and the Dutch have had the folly to throw the trade with Holland into our hands. There is no pretence that we cannot keep pace with the French, the

Portuguese, and the Spaniards, upon equal terms—in short, there is no branch of our commerce, except that with the United States of America, which either is not important, or which is not almost wholly possessed by our own shipping. Give but the British ship-owners fair play, only “save them from themselves,” and nothing but that species of cupidity, which cannot bear to see a single farthing pass by its own clutches, would be able to suggest even the semblance of a complaint.

The general account which we have been just giving of the field of employment for merchant shipping—even under the operation of the system of reciprocity to which the shipowners choose to attribute grievances of their own creating—of this, we say, mighty field of employment may be the basis and introduction to the few remarks which we can find space for on that part of the subject of navigation which concerns our naval superiority.

Mr. Huskisson did not *volunteer* the reciprocity system: he would willingly have left other countries to have slept on, in their former supineness to our navigation laws, had they been disposed to do so. When he held out the hand of equal privileges, he did it in order to avoid—what he saw was approaching—a state of universal intercourse, the most hostile imaginable to commerce. Nothing, hardly, can be more anti-commercial than restriction in navigation. The basis of commerce is the diversity of productions in different places: this creates the necessity of moving those productions, in order that they may be universally enjoyed; and the first desideratum of commerce, which undertakes their distribution, is the *facility of the removal*.

Navigation, therefore, is subservient to commerce; and clear and strong should be the grounds of that institution, which should be allowed to reverse these relations. The necessity to us of a *certain* quantity of mercantile marine is fully admitted; and the question is—have we not enough of it?

Mr. Huskisson, to the honour of his great name, has left behind him ample proof that he well considered the subject of reciprocity with reference to the *adequacy* of the degree of maritime strength which would be retained for the country under the operation of a system which he saw so much occasion to introduce: and his disinterested and statesman-like opinion upon that subject ought to prevail with the public over all the clamour which a body of interested traders may choose to raise against his measures. He explicitly stated to Parliament the grounds of his proceedings. He exhibited a comparison between the present peace establishment of our navy and its condition at the breaking out of any of our wars; he compared the present navies of the other nations of the world with former foreign navies at those epochs: and he brought out the gratifying fact, that our superiority is far more decided than it used to be. He then showed that, exclusive of any trade we might hope to acquire by carrying on a war of duties with the rest of the world, the present quantity of our mercantile marine was far beyond what it had been in those former times, when it was fostered by any direct assistance from the state. In short, he convinced the House that "navigation" was satisfied, and that "commerce" could be safely re-admitted to claim its rights. Where is the disinterested man who, upon trading principles, would sacrifice commerce to navigation?

Let us put one more question.—Suppose that for some reason the protective portion of the timber duty were levied on buildings, and collected, half yearly, from door to door; and that the produce were distributed in bounties to the ship-owners and colonists. With what temper would a sum, quite equal to the late house tax, be *so* paid for *such* a purpose? The mode of collection and distribution does not alter the case; and yet people, who almost rebelled against the house tax, seem to court the charge of the timber tax!

In the foregoing pages Mr. Hume barely alludes to

that part of his evidence in which, upon being asked whether he thought it possible, without inconvenience, to afford the shipping interest a similar advantage to what was afforded to mines with respect to having timber free of duty, he replied :—

“ When Mr. Huskisson was President of the Board of Trade he was very anxious to make an arrangement by which the ship-owners might have a drawback of the duties on timber used in ship-building. I pointed out to him that the duty on timber, bricks, and everything else, was taken off, when the materials were used for the building of churches. I thought we might give the shipping interest a similar advantage, and that the ships might be surveyed at proper stages of their building by proper persons, who would ascertain the quantity that had been made use of. But the shipowners rejected the proposal. They said it would be a means of building ships in future much cheaper than their own had been built, and that it would be a bounty to the building of more ships. It was then observed that the national interest was usually urged in favour of the shipping interest, and with it the maritime strength of the country: but the parties seemed to think that it would be very hard to lower the value of their present ships for a future object of that nature, particularly when that property had been already lowered as much as it had been at that time.”

Mr. Hume's reply to the question “ Do you think there would be no practical difficulty in effecting your proposal?” was as remarkable as it was characteristic : “ My opinion is, there is no difficulty which is not surmountable if the object should be deemed of sufficient importance.”

In October, 1843, the duties on foreign timber were

reduced 25s. per load, and 32s. per load on foreign deals, and to 1s. per load on timber, 2s. per load on deals, the produce of British possessions. Further modifications of the foreign timber were adopted in 1846, so that in the following year unsawn wood was admitted at 20s., and deals and battens at 26s. per load: which rates were further reduced respectively in 1848 to 15s. and 20s.

“In every civilized country,” said Mr. Porter, a disciple of the same school, in the year 1850, “timber is an article of consumption of the very first necessity, and where, as in this country, the supply is insufficient,\* its importation should be rendered as free as possible. If, through the necessities of the Government, it should be found necessary to tax this, which may be called one of the chief raw materials of manufacture, without which, in fact, scarcely any other manufacture could be carried on, it would be some consolation to know that the tax answered its legitimate purpose, and perhaps stood in the place of some other equally objectionable import. Owing, however, to the discriminating duties

\* “Besides those countries to which we have hitherto alluded, there are districts to be explored into which the woodman’s axe has never yet penetrated, with a view to the supply of Western Europe, whence we may draw supplies for ages to come of a quality equal to everything that can be wished, and adapted to purposes which it is now difficult to satisfy. From the forests of Albania, as well as those of Circassia, and all the coasts of the Black Sea and the banks of the Danube, we may—if political, and still more, if fiscal obstacles are removed—draw inexhaustible supplies of the finest wood, including oak of the largest size, and at prices more advantageous than any other countries have offered, at least in modern times.”—PORTER’S *Progress of the Nation*, 1850.

in favour of the timber of our northern colonies, a sum at least equal to the amount that now finds its way under this head into the Exchequer is lost to the public, its only use being to afford employment to a number of old and worn-out ships, which it would be more advantageous to the country to buy, and then break up and sell their materials for fuel, than it would be to continue the present modified system."



## CHAPTER IX.

MR. DEACON HUME RETIRES FROM THE BOARD OF TRADE—RESIDES AT REIGATE—SIR ROBERT PEEL'S REQUEST OFTEN COMPLIED WITH—MR. HUME IS SUCCEEDED BY MR. MACGREGOR—THE FORMER SUGGESTS THE APPOINTMENT OF A SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE IMPORT DUTIES—MR. MACGREGOR—HIS EVIDENCE—MR. DEACON HUME'S EVIDENCE—REMARKABLE PASSAGES.

"All the world has heard that Mr. Deacon Hume's evidence before the Import Duties Committee in 1840, had great weight with all the leading men of all parties."—LORD JOHN RUSSELL.

THERE is a measure in all things, and in nothing is it more necessary than in the exactions which are made upon the time and attention of public men. Few minds can bear a heavy strain for a lengthened period with impunity. And even in the excepted cases, the season of repose ought not to be too long delayed.

In the year 1840, though his health was not apparently much impaired, Mr. Deacon Hume retired from the Board of Trade. He also left Putney, where, after a ten years' residence in Russell Square, he had lived for two years, and took up his abode at Reigate, one of the most salubrious and most beautiful localities in England. A pension of 1,500*l.* a year was granted him by the Government, in consideration of his long and valuable

services. Sir Robert Peel, the Prime Minister of the day, took occasion to express regret at his retirement, and at the same time a hope that he would not object to repair occasionally to town, if he should be requested to do so, and afford the Government the benefit of his counsel and experience. This was no parting compliment. Sir Robert Peel's official intercourse with Mr. Hume had extended over a period of thirty years; to him that great Minister was almost entirely indebted for the correct knowledge he had acquired of the true principles of commerce and of international trade. He especially lamented Mr. Hume's relinquishment of office at the particular period at which it occurred. We will not say, as some of the Prime Minister's classical opponents might not unnaturally have said, that he knew that the country had been ploughed, and the dragon's teeth sown, and that heads and armed hands were about to rise out of the ground, but the proceedings of the Anti-Corn Law League forewarned him that trying times were at hand, and that it would be in Mr. Hume's power to render important service to the Government. The request was repeatedly made, and it was constantly complied with. His journeys from Reigate to Whitehall, or to Downing Street, continued to be neither few nor far between to the time of his death, which to many, since he was not very far advanced in years, appeared to be distant.

Mr. Deacon Hume was succeeded at the Board of Trade by a gentleman with whom he was acquainted, and who, he was glad to hear, was appointed to be his

successor—Mr. John Macgregor, afterwards member for Glasgow. He has been described by one competent to form an impartial estimate of his character, as “an intelligent and amiable man, of no common mind, of extraordinary powers of application, and devoted to the subject of political economy.”\* During Lord Melbourne’s administration, the same authority states, and it was pretty generally known, that he had been engaged on commercial missions to Germany, Austria, Paris, and Naples. And the writer referred to has expressed his belief that his missions were “generally well performed—that they advanced sound principles of political economy, and that, upon the whole, the product was worth the cost to the Exchequer.”

Although Mr. Deacon Hume had much to occupy

\* He first became known as an author by the publication, in 1832, of two octavo volumes, entitled “British America,” published by Blackwood and Cadell. This work reached a second and improved edition in the following year. It was not only, at the period, highly interesting, but it abounded in facts and statistics, and it displayed a large comprehension of our future colonial interests. In 1835 he published “My Note Book,” dedicated to his friend Sismondi. It was chiefly a personal narrative of his tours on the Continent. In 1847 he published two crown octavo volumes, historical and statistical, on “The Progress of America, from the discovery by Columbus to the year 1846,” comprising three thousand pages. Four similar volumes, entitled “Commercial Statistics.” In 1852 he published “The History of the British Empire, from the Accession of James I.,” 2 vols. 8vo. Earlier in life, in the Canadas, he had prepared reports on North American emigration, on the Newfoundland fisheries, and on similar Transatlantic subjects; and to his home productions may be added twenty-two Reports on Foreign Tariffs and Trade, presented to Parliament by Royal command; numerous pamphlets on subjects of the day, and an extent of private and statistical correspondence at home and abroad almost incredible.

his mind at the time that he quitted office, he had in no degree become indifferent with regard to the success of the great object for the accomplishment of which he had toiled for so many years, through every variety of circumstance, in the hope, sometimes delusive, rarely strong, that he should live to witness the event, which, so far as commercial relations are concerned, he believed would prove the harbinger of bright and happy days for England and the world. As a last, and, as it proved, a crowning effort, he took an opportunity of suggesting to an experienced and influential member of Parliament of the same name, to whom, however, he was not allied, or even intimately known, Mr. Joseph Hume, the expediency of moving for a Select Committee to inquire into the several duties levied on imports into the United Kingdom, intimating at the same time that he would be able to give important evidence if he were examined. This suggestion was energetically seconded by Mr. Macgregor. They thought that it would be for the public interest if those who were, or who had been in office at the Board of Trade, could be transferred for a short time from their homes, or from their private offices in Whitehall, into a committee room of the House of Commons, for then, not only would their evidence be given publicly, but it would be ordered to be printed, and circulated through the country. Mr. Joseph Hume was much too sensible of the great results which might be expected from such a course, not to give it due consideration; for even if it should fall short of what

Mr. Deacon Hume and Mr. Macgregor expected from it—the overthrow of protection—he knew that it would still do considerable service. No one was more sensible than the veteran member for Montrose, whose attention to Parliamentary business had probably never been equalled, of the utility of Committees of Parliament, as well as of Commissions under the Great Seal. He had had more opportunities than any other person of observing the good which they effect upon the whole, “not,” as it has been excellently said, “more directly and positively, than indirectly, by giving opportunities for ascertaining and publishing the views of well-informed men; by forcibly attracting public attention to different objects of legislation, and by diffusing correct opinions.” Such inquiries are made before the public, and the results are laid before the public in a permanent form. “The evidence,” in part at least, “is drawn indifferently from the bosom of the public, and not from witnesses schooled by the Government: the witnesses who present themselves are most frequently the best informed part of the community. Their constitution is founded, as it were, on a general appeal to the public, who are called on to come forward and say what they know. The nation thus steps into the Houses of Parliament in a new shape, and with a new voice; it legislates by a new delegation, of which the members and peers are only the mouthpieces—the scribes of reports and bills. The laws springing out of such inquiries have an unspeakable advantage over those concocted by the unaided legislature; they are publicly canvassed and

sanctioned before passing; they are ordained as it were out of doors, before they are ordained within. There is a virtue in open procedure and evidence, not only for the discovery of facts, but for giving confidence out of doors, that the best and fairest means are used for the disclosure of truth, which enters into the habitual convictions of the English people. This principle redeems half the vices of the law, and ensures its observance and execution. A hundred and seventy years ago, Colbert could call the weavers and looking-glass makers into his cabinet, examine them as he pleased, and draw up what ordinances he pleased; for there was no public opinion, or rather, no public in France. Men were formerly governed by absolute will, which neither heeded nor vouchsafed to explain the motives of its conduct: but rulers are now-a-days compelled to fortify their acts by evidence, or the show of evidence. The public will have its why and its wherefore, and governments must give their reasons."

Mr. Deacon Hume evidently had reasons, which he probably did not make known, for being sanguine with respect to the appointment of a select committee. The only doubt which Mr. Joseph Hume entertained, was, whether the government, which was powerful, and still supporting the protective system, could be induced to grant it. He, however, resolved to see what he could do; and having obtained consent, observed exultingly to his friends, that "the battle of free-trade was about to be won." He was confident that such an overwhelming

weight of testimony in favour of commercial freedom would be adduced, as neither Parliament nor the country would be able to gainsay or resist.

On the 5th of May, 1840, a Select Committee was appointed "to inquire into the several duties levied on imports into the United Kingdom: how far those duties are for protection to similar articles, the produce and manufacture of this country or of the British possessions abroad, or whether the duties are for the purposes of revenue alone."

This celebrated Committee, which the advocates of protection considered to be somewhat one-sided in its composition, consisted of Mr. Joseph Hume (chairman), Mr. Tuffnell, Mr. W. J. Blake, Mr. Ewart, Mr. Thornely, Mr. W. Williams, Mr. Villiers, Sir George Clerk, Mr. W. Duncombe, Mr. Ormsby Gore, Sir George Sinclair, Mr. Labouchere, Sir Charles Douglas, Mr. Aaron Chapman, and Sir Henry Parnell. The "power to send for persons, papers, and records" ransacked the Board of Trade, and let loose the tongues of the Joint Secretaries, and also of the late Secretary. The witnesses who were examined, as an able writer justly remarked,\* were, "many of them, persons of the highest authority upon the subject which was under investigation; three of them eminently so, from their connection with the Board of Trade, namely, Mr. Deacon Hume, Mr. Macgregor, and Mr. J. R. Porter." Mr. Macgregor, the new Secretary, was, of course, the first witness summoned. His examination exclusively

\* "Edinburgh Review," No. cxlvi.

occupied the entire first two days, and portions of the third and fourth. "It has been the fashion," says an authority before quoted, to state, "that he lied through his testimony. The imputation is untrue. His dogmatic confidence of opinion, with an occasional reckless statement, gave indeed a colour to this accusation, but the resource of his opponents was unfairly to discredit his important evidence; and, the protectionists not producing any counter-evidence, this slander was their only alternative. But any dispassionate reader will now give credit to the general and valuable evidence of Mr. Macgregor. Further, he was confirmed by the more reliable evidence of Mr. Deacon Hume, and of Mr. Porter, to say nothing of the corroborative testimony of some of our most eminent city and provincial merchants and manufacturers."\* Sir John J. Guest, Bart., M.P., Mr. Hanley, and Sir John Bowring were examined; amongst others, and their testimony, especially that of the latter, who had been employed by the Government in various commercial missions to France, Belgium, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, and to the East, was as interesting as it was valuable. It is, however, with the evidence of Mr. Deacon Hume that we are more immediately concerned. It is due to his past labours, productive as they were of great results, that it should be noticed at some length; not only on account of its intrinsic value, abounding as it does with profound sentiments, applicable to all time, and because the report which contains it, never very accessible to

\* *The Times*, April 27, 1857.



general readers, is now rarely to be met with ; but also because it is in every way characteristic of the person—and because it is interesting to observe, how remarkably his opinions, not to say predictions, have in most instances been verified, since the principles of free-trade have been adopted by the legislature of this country. As, however, his evidence occupies thirty-four printed folio pages, it cannot, in its original form, conveniently be made available for this volume. Select passages, complete in themselves, are all that can be given. And when it is borne in mind that they were spoken upon the moment, and in answer to questions proposed by members of the House of Commons, conversant with the subject (the questions which elicited the remarks will be guessed at by the reader without difficulty), few will fail to be struck with the accuracy and condensation with which the thoughts are expressed, and the information is imparted.

#### PROTECTIVE DUTIES OBSTRUCTIVE.

“ Every branch of our industry which has been protected by high duties has made less progress than it would have done if foreign articles of the same kind had been admitted. The removal of protection might end in extinguishing some trades, or particular branches of trade. It is very easy, in the poorest country, to draw a little circle round a small body of people, and to pamper and support them with emoluments and profits, which they can hardly be said to earn themselves, and which are a heavy tax upon other people : but where protection has been grossly misapplied, the trade would be given up.”

## FREE-TRADE MUST ULTIMATELY PREVAIL IN ALL COUNTRIES.

"If we were to give up our protective system altogether, I think it would be impossible for other countries to retain theirs much longer.

"There is a difficulty in comparing one description of goods which one country makes with a totally different description made in another; and equal terms can hardly be made; but I feel confident if we were entirely to discontinue our system of protection, in a very little time it would be a race with other countries which would be first, or rather, which should avoid to be the last, to come in for the benefits of that trade which we would then open."

## HIGH TAXATION NO PLEA FOR PROTECTION.

"It is a plea with some interests that their protection should be continued because they are so highly taxed, or pay so highly for the necessaries of life, that they cannot compete with their foreign rivals; I think it, however, not only groundless, but that the opposite is the true proposition. A highly taxed people cannot afford to give protection: an individual whose necessary expenses are great cannot be generous."

## THE AMOUNT OF COTTON EXPORTED A PROOF OF THE FUTILITY OF PROTECTION.

"I consider that the amount of our cotton export is a perfect proof that protection is futile and useless. I would remove the duty, if it were only for the sake of holding out an example to the world. The duty of ten per cent. upon foreign cotton is as useless to our cotton manufactures as our duty of two pounds a ton is to our coal trade."

FREE-TRADE APPLICABLE TO ALL OUR COMMERCIAL  
TRANSACTIONS.

“I would apply the principles of free-trade generally to the commercial transactions of this country. I would make our laws according to that I deemed best, which would certainly be to give the freest possible introduction to the goods of other nations into our country, and I should leave others to take advantage of it or not, as they thought fit. There can be no doubt that if we imported from any country any considerable quantity of goods, and the manufactures of that country were protected, the producers of those goods which we took would very soon find the great difficulty they had in getting their returns; and, instead of our soliciting the governments of those countries to admit our goods, our advocates for that admission would be in the country itself; they would arise from the exporters of the goods which we received.”

THE TRADE IN METALS.

“If there is any trade in this country which we ought to see put upon its sound footing, and which ought to be able to stand its own ground, it is the trade in metals. If, in consequence of the discovery of mines abroad, in peculiar situations, any of those metals can for a time be brought cheaper into this country, and of course into others, than they can be raised in some of the inferior mines here, we ought to admit them, and take care that we preserve our trade in metals. We should admit the raw material, let it come from whence it will, always remembering, that we cannot equally exclude that material from the manufactories of our foreign rivals.”

COMMERCIAL MATTERS BEST SETTLED BY OURSELVES.

“I think we should settle our commerce better by ourselves than by attempting to make arrangements with other

countries. We make proposals: they do not agree to them. We afterwards feel a repugnance to do that which we ought perhaps in the first instance to have done of our own accord; and I go upon the principle, that it is impossible for us to import too much; that we may be quite sure that the export will follow in some form or other, and that the making of the articles to be exported will be an employment infinitely more beneficial to this country than that which may be thus superseded.

“I think it is unwise to do that on stipulation, upon certain terms, which upon any terms it would be better for us to do ourselves. My chief objections to treating are, first, the risk of refusal, and the repugnance to act after refusal; and next, that in the case of compliance, the people of the other country think that their government have been duped into a bad bargain.”

#### FOOD THE LAST THING THAT SHOULD BE TAXED.

“If I were compelled to choose, food is the last thing upon which I would attempt to place any protection. It is very clear, that this country stands in need of a vast deal of agricultural produce beyond its production, which is not to be measured merely by the quantity of corn which we occasionally import, because we habitually import very largely of those articles that are the produce of land and suited to be raised in this country, besides corn, and which shows that the power of supply is very much strained. Although we view it chiefly in the article of corn, we import a very large quantity of other commodities, commonly and habitually, such as are the produce of our own soil, or fit to be so; and this proves clearly that we want more than we can produce. The exclusion of supply in such a case is cruel privation.”

#### PROTECTIVE DUTIES A DIRECT TAX UPON THE PEOPLE.

“Protective duties are a direct tax upon the community. I cannot analyse the charge which I pay in any other way, than

that part of it is the price of the commodity, and part is a duty, though it goes out of my private pocket into another private pocket, instead of into that of the public. I am asked whether it adds to the wealth of the country, or whether it checks the general industry which is applied in our manufactures? I think it cannot add to the wealth of the country, because it is clear that we consume commodities at a greater price than the necessary price; and, consequently, we waste labour and capital in the production, and waste can never ultimately do good, at least to a nation, although some individuals may thrive upon it."

#### COMMERCE AND MANUFACTURE THE SOURCES OF OUR WEALTH.

"The wealth of England is caused and maintained by her commercial and manufacturing industry. I mean in contradistinction to the produce of the soil. It is only necessary to look round the world, and see what countries there are of much richer soil, that are in a state of comparative poverty, and also to look back to our own history, of no long period, to see that with the same quantity of land we have now, we were a poor country, compared with what we are now; therefore, having always had the land, but not the trade, I conceive that the increase of our riches arises from the trade, and not from the land. It can be traced to no other source. The only difference that I can see in the present state of the country, and the country a century ago, is, that by commerce and manufactures we have acquired riches, and raised up a population which is not only able to consume, but also able to pay good prices for the produce of our land. If the same population had been raised by other means they would have been a burden to the land instead of an advantage."

#### WHAT IT IS THAT TENDS TO UNDERMINE THEM.

Every limitation in the importation of food, and every rise in the price of food, tends to undermine the manufactures of the

country, upon which we depend. I conceive that it must be so, because we place ourselves at the risk of being surpassed by the manufactures in other countries; and as soon as it happens, if ever the day should arrive, that we should be put to a severe trial as to our manufacturing power, I can hardly doubt that the prosperity of this country will recede much faster than it has gone forward."

HIGH TAXATION NO ARGUMENT AGAINST A REPEAL OF THE  
CORN LAWS.

"I have often heard it stated, that the people of England, being higher taxed than that of any other country, would be unable, as regards the price of food, to compete with other countries if the corn laws were repealed. I have always been surprised at the argument, because it appears to me that the very circumstance of our being so highly taxed for the good of the State, is a reason why we should not be taxed between ourselves. It is the greatest fallacy I can conceive; it is the very opposite of the true proportion."

THE TENDENCY OF OUR CAPITAL TO LEAVE THIS COUNTRY.

"There is a tendency in our capital to leave this country and establish itself on the Continent. What the people on the Continent want most is, large capital. They are every year obtaining very considerable capital as well as artisans from this country, and even master manufacturers.

"The direct tendency of the present system is to drive a large amount of capital to those countries which are engaged in rivalry with us. I wonder that the trading part of the community have not taken this view of the matter earlier: I can only account for it upon this supposition, that the most influential and the most advanced have believed and felt confident that the shifting of the trade was a matter of slow operation, and that it would last their time. I think that this makes the great difference between the former supineness of

our manufacturers upon the subject of the corn laws, and their recent activity upon that subject. The day of trial is not now so distant, in the view of the present parties, as it was in that of their predecessors, or even of themselves some years ago. By the protective system, we not only check the collection of the revenue immediately, but we are also undermining our resources. I cannot help often looking at the consequences with considerable alarm. I think the country cannot stand such a system as this for a long period. I have not a doubt that if there were no protective duties the revenue would flow in with a very great increase, and with great ease, owing to the increase of population, and the greater ability of men to pay the state taxes, being relieved from paying taxes to individuals. If the protective system were entirely removed, the effect would be to produce a large population, and a well employed population. The tendency of the corn laws, and other protective duties, is to throw the people out of work, and to diminish their employment. But even taking the population as it is, and its property as it is, if they were relieved from that additional price on the goods which we pay on account of their being protected, the people of this country would be able, and would, in effect, in the expenditure of their incomes, pay a larger proportion to the revenue."

#### PROTECTIVE DUTIES A TAX, PUT IT AS WE WILL.

"It matters little to the consumer whether he pays so much more for his food as a tax to the revenue, or whether he pays so much more for his food as a tax for protection. The enhanced price, from whatever cause, is the same. Suppose that instead of protecting land by a duty on foreign corn, the country were left to get corn at the cheapest rate, and then that a revenue was raised for the express purpose of being applied to the support of the land. It would be too palpable. It could not be borne. But I conceive the effect of the

present system upon the consumer to be the same. It would be better, perhaps cheaper, to pay directly than indirectly, because trade would then be free. Suppose a tax was imposed upon flour ground at the mill, every person would pay it, and it would pay a large revenue according to the rate. It would be less noxious to the people and to trade than the present protecting duty. It is quite possible that a large revenue might be collected by that means, and the public pay a less price than they do now. It would be only a charge, and not also an impediment to trade."

"I think a tolerable calculation may be made of the increased amount of taxation which the community pay in consequence of the increased price of wheat and butchers' meat, which is occasioned by the monopoly which is now held by land. It is generally calculated that each person, upon the average, consumes a quarter of wheat a year. Assuming, then, the amount of duty that this wheat paid, or the price enhanced by protection, whatever that is, as far as bread goes, to be ten shillings, it would be that amount upon the whole population. Then you could hardly say less than, perhaps, double that for butchers' meat and other matters: or that if we were to say that the corn is enhanced by ten shillings a quarter, there would be that ten shillings, and twenty shillings more, as the increase of the price of meat and other agricultural productions, including hay and oats for horses, barley for beer, as well as butter and cheese. That would be 36,000,000*l.* a year, and the public are in fact paying that as effectually out of their pockets as if it went to the revenue, in the form of direct taxes: and having paid the private taxes, they are the less able to pay the public taxes. And the effect of that is to cripple and limit the industry of the country. The great evil lies in this branch of the matter. It is not so calculable, but if the public could have the trade which I believe they would have if all these protections were



removed, I think they could pay thirty shillings a head easily compared with what they can do now."

"The burden of the protective system generally, I should say, exceeds the whole amount of the taxation which is paid to the state, taking the cost and the evil consequences together, if that evil were equally subject to computation. It is the case with many duties, such as some of the excise duties, which are more injurious in their regulations than they are in the sum which is taken from the people, though you cannot estimate the injurious effect. I conceive the actual money paid, and the evil effect computed in money, would be more than the entire revenue of the country. If a mode could be adopted, and the alternative were whether we should continue the protection or compensate some partial injury, which might be inflicted upon some existing interests in the change, I should not hesitate a moment to say give the compensation. I have often seen duties kept up because of the injury which the removal of them would occasion to particular interests, when a comparatively small sum would have compensated the parties. One of our greatest faults is that we will not pay the price of extrication from former errors.

"We cannot estimate the number of parties that may have an interest at a future day; you cannot settle with the present too soon. As population increases more parties will be drawn into that branch of trade. Take the case of the timber duties, which are kept up under the plea of protecting the shipping interest, and, in some degree, the colonies. I am asked how the change could be introduced, and how I would arrange for compensating the parties interested. The class of ships considered to be most benefited by the timber duties are the old ships, which it is said would be of no value if that trade were abolished, and that is because their number is too great for the other branches of inferior trade

alone. But, if at the end of the Canada timber season, and before any expense is incurred upon the ships in fitting out for another voyage, all those that are in the least fit for better trades were to be valued, the entire sum would not be equal to the amount of duty that would be gained in the next season by a judicious alteration of the duties. We might, therefore, buy up these ships for breaking up, so as effectually to compensate all the parties who conceive that they would be injured by losing that particular trade for that class of ships, and the remaining ships would find ample employment for all that they could want in other trades. The amount of one year's loss given at once as a compensation would save the losses of all subsequent years. This would satisfy the shipowners; and as to the Canadians, only give them free-trade and they will gladly give it to you in return.

“There might be some difficulties in effecting the purpose in certain cases with reference to certain other protected interests; but I am quite sure that the cheapest thing the country could do would be to compensate them at once, and put an end to the bad system which will otherwise put an end to itself some day or other, and the prosperity of the country with it.”

At the close of Mr. Deacon Hume's examination before the Import Duties Committee, on the 16th of July, he was requested by the chairman to prepare a list of articles subject to protective duties on importation, and to express his opinion as to how far they ought to be continued, or might be removed, with reference to the existing commerce of the country. On the 20th he produced his list; taking occasion, at the same time to observe, that in effecting the change from a system of duties for protection, to one of revenue alone, the proceedings should be gradual; and that the

duties should be reduced, in the first instance, upon those manufactures which are least exposed to foreign competition.

Upon this principle he divided the several manufactures into three distinct classes. "Not," as he said, "with the strictest regularity, but because the degree of importance, in the different cases, differs very considerably. I put in the *first class* those to which I conceive the greatest importance must be attached as regards protection, and also taking into view the revenue which the articles, many of them, produce. Keeping in mind the same purpose, I arrange the *second class*, and the *third* upon the same principle."

#### CLASS I.

Corn; Malt (prohibited); Silks; Linens; Woollens; Hats; Felt, &c.; Watches; Paper; Plate; Carriages; Cottons; Copper; Tin; Fish and Fish Oil; Whalebone; Beef and Pork, salted; Butcher's Meat (prohibited); Cattle (ditto); Sheep (ditto); Swine (ditto); Hardware; Glass; China; Earthenware; Cordage; Brandy; Geneva; Sugar; Coffee; Rum.

#### CLASS II.

Lace; Shawls; Gauze and Thread; Gloves; Straw Hats and Bonnets; Straw Plaiting; Shoes and Boots; Embroidery and Needlework; Buttons; Jewelry; Turnery; Musical Instruments; Picture Frames; Telescopes; Wire; Leather; Parchment; Mill-board; Casks; Twine; Whipcord; Corks (made); Hides and Skins; Oak Bark; Oak Timber; Seeds; Butter; Cheese; Starch; Tallow; Soap; Candles; Vinegar; Hops; Beer; Cider; Meal; Mustard; Essential Oils; Oil of Turpentine; Rosin; Turpentine; Tar; Pitch.

## CLASS III.

Lead; Spelter; Manganese Ore; Stone; Gypsum; Alum; Alkali; Barilla; Black-lead; Copperas; Smalts; Brass Powder; Camphor, refined; Tinfoil; Chalk; Crayons; Ashes; Tobacco Pipes; Bricks; Tiles; Clinkers; Hones; Whetstones; Hams; Tongues; Bacon; Lard; Eggs; Sausages; Bladders; Pickles; Wax; Honey; Onions; Potatoes; Hay; Grease; Glue; Pearl Barley; Arrowroot; Nuts; Truffles; Flower Roots; Basket Rods; Bullrushes; Quills; Pens; Feathers; Camomile Flowers; Lavender Flowers; Macaroni; Rice; Chip Hats; Baskets; Mats and Matting; Vellum.

Upon being asked whether it was from his experience at the Board of Trade that he had learnt that great importance is attached to these duties by particular interests, he replied in the affirmative; and that in proportion to that importance he had endeavoured to class them in different ranks. He added, "I would rather say that I have classed them in regard to the difficulty which might attend any change of system. I think the opposition to the removal would be the greatest in the first class. The struggle would, perhaps, be somewhat less in the second; while, in reference to the third, the duties might be removed with very little difficulty or objection. I do not contemplate the removal of the protection upon the articles in the first class, unless as part of a general system, and then I think very few British interests would be affected at all by such a compendious change, and scarcely any materially. The whole should be done simultaneously, if it were done with respect to those goods which I have put

in the first class. I can imagine that you might begin at the other end, and remove the protection in the third class, and so upwards, to the second, without any material effect; but upon the principle upon which those which are in the first class have been placed there by me, I should say that they were either the last to be done, or only in consequence of a total change of system."

Having laid before the reader the three classes of articles, subject on importation to protective duties, as they were laid before the Import Duties Committee by Mr. Deacon Hume, with his explanatory and suggestive observations, we will again proceed to give his views and opinions upon some important points in his own words, and, as before, under distinct heads.

#### SOME POSSIBLE RESULTS OF CHANGE FROM PROTECTIVE DUTIES TO FREE TRADE.

"I am far from supposing that a change from protection to a totally free system would not make many changes in the employment of the industry of this country, and it is possible that that change might lead to the relinquishing of some branches of the silk, and even of cotton, manufactures. But with the reliance that I have upon the effect of a general system of free trade, I cannot bring my mind to believe that we should not make stockings or manufacture silk very largely in this country if all protection were removed, provided that the system were general, so that the expense of living of the labourers in those cases which the several questions have so particularly pointed at, should be reduced to the natural amount. That must certainly be understood to mean that the corn trade should be free, that meat, that every article of consumption, should for the future be free; and were that the case, no change being made in the revenue, I

can scarcely believe that the natural effect would not be to raise the product of the revenue a fourth, or perhaps a third greater than it is, without laying on a single additional duty; and in that case we clearly see how easy it would be to relieve those parties who are now much pressed by competition from those taxes which were considered to oppress them to the greatest degree, and to place them on a fairer footing with the foreign competitors than they now are. I believe the necessity of protection is occasioned almost entirely by protection itself."

#### ENGLAND MIGHT BE A CHEAP COUNTRY TO LIVE IN.

"With our great command of trade, our navigation, our capital, and our geographical position, if trade in this country were perfectly free, and we were enabled to obtain in the cheapest markets, upon even terms, all the commodities we want, I can see no reason why this should not be one of the cheapest countries to live in that any civilized populous country can be. There are many matters in which density of population leads to cheapness."

#### A FIXED DUTY.

"I am against a small fixed duty on corn. My opinion is that there is no ground for any duty. The only ground I can perceive, is to countervail charges in the production of corn. I know that there are a great many charges which the landed interest conceive to lie peculiarly upon them, and to fall upon their productions; but as far as I have been able to investigate those charges, I think they have services in return for them, and they do not go to the public revenue: they are of a local nature, and I think the farmers are so much better off, and so much more enabled to raise the commodity with advantage by reason of those local charges, since they have facilities in return equal to the payment; and I firmly believe that any country that has not the system of raising

funds for the purposes for which those local funds are raised, would be at a great disadvantage in the production of agricultural produce."

#### MISAPPROPRIATION OF THE SOIL.

"One of the great evils of our agriculture is the misappropriation of the soil. I believe there is a great deal too large a proportion of land under the plough, and too small a portion under grass. The difficulty of raising lean stock in this country for the purpose of fattening is so great, that it is the chief cause of the high price of meat; and I am persuaded that if a very large breadth of that arable land which can scarcely be cultivated to advantage were turned back to grass, the effect would be to reduce the quantity of corn produced in this country so much, as to make it impossible for the foreigner to fill the vacuum at a low price, and that the general result would be, that it would produce a lower price of meat, there being a power of increased consumption in the present state of the country in the article of meat that is almost immeasurable. When we reflect upon the extremely small portion of meat eaten every day by the most robust labourers in the country, who are of course by far the most numerous portion of the population, if we were only to suppose them to have every day a fair moderate meal of meat, the increased demand for meat, and for inferior meat, for cattle not fatted to the highest degree, such as would be suitable to the produce of land of inferior qualities, would be so great, that there would be no want of employment for any land that we possess within our boundaries."

#### THE CHANGE FROM ARABLE TO PASTURE.

"I think the corn laws have tended to the breaking up of land which had better have remained grass. As to waste lands there can be no doubt that the demand for produce has

led to the breaking up of commons, and so far it is well; but it by no means follows that it should be kept permanently under the plough when there is a much greater demand for grass. With regard to the effect of the protection on our corn, that can hardly be said to have been the cause of the breaking up of so much land, because I believe it is within the knowledge of most people that the era in which the lands were chiefly broken up was during the period of the war, and that corn was being imported without any restraint whatever through the whole of that period. I believe that many persons have since repented that they have broken up their lands. The breaking up of waste land is a process that one would always wish to see going on: the very idea of land lying waste is repugnant to one's feelings, as long as it can be applied to any use, but that is a very different thing from having in cultivation a disproportion of arable. The inducement to break up waste lands would not be directly the protection, but the price, and whatever was the cause of a high price would lead to the cultivation of the waste lands, whether it were a state of war, the increase of population, or anything else: as long as there was a good price for the produce of land, persons possessing or having a right to those waste lands would bring them into cultivation."

#### THE PRICE OF LAND IN ENGLAND.

"Looking to the increase of the population which has doubled in the last half-century, one does not know how to limit the price of land in this country, provided through no bad policy the increase of that population and its prosperity be not checked. No one knows precisely how the matter stands; but as far as the little information I have upon the subject goes, I believe that an exhibition of the rent rolls of different parts of the country for the last half-century would lay before the public eye one of the most astounding accounts that was ever witnessed."



## THE IMPETUS GIVEN TO TRADE SHORTLY BEFORE THE YEAR 1800.

“The start in manufactures which took place towards the end of the last century was the cause of the increase in the price of land. The war led in the first instance to what may be said to be a wasteful consumption of food; a large portion of the people who were subsisting at home with the greatest economy, were converted into soldiers and sailors, and were supported at the public expense; but the great peculiarity of that period was the commencement of the great increase of our manufactures; the bringing to perfection Mr. Arkwright’s system, the introduction of steam power, and the vast improvement in machinery: we were the first to adopt those improvements, and from the circumstance of the rest of the world being so much more disadvantageously placed in the war of that time, they were then unable to follow us, but time and peace have altered the case very much, and we cannot expect to reap the same benefits after a certain period from any new discovery, however great it may be, that we did in the earlier stages. The cause of the increase in the value of land was the start in manufactures; but we kept the start the longer by reason of the war. Decrease in the value of land will only occur from the decline of manufactures in this country. That is the only matter to which I look with any apprehension as regards the prosperity of this country.”

## THE PROGRESS OF MANUFACTURE.

“At the present time an extraordinary progress is being made in different branches of manufacture in Germany, and other parts of the Continent, where, a few years ago, the manufactories were producing comparatively very small quantities. This is a subject of great uneasiness to my mind. I think I see a change taking place, and that we may find ourselves mistaken in supposing that we can always retain the trade, which, having commenced with great advantages in the first instance, we were in the earlier stages allowed to carry on to

a great extent. But it is because I fear this, because I see the power of competition rising abroad, because I expect these countries will some day drive us out of the foreign market, and thus deprive us of our means of exportation, that I am so anxious to remove what I think are the impediments to an equal power of competition on our part with those foreign countries. By impediments I mean the expense of living in this country, and the charges upon that living. And also the checking of commercial intercourse with other countries by the protective system, which prevents our manufacturers from obtaining their best returns for the goods they can export. The progress in manufactures which is observable abroad is such, that unless we take some strong measures for the purpose of putting our population upon a natural footing, and therefore upon nearly the same footing with their competitors, I look forward with apprehension to the trade of this country suffering considerably: that is a reason for taking off all protections, and it is a very different operation from that which would go to the imposing of protecting duties for the express purpose of reimbursing particular interests for the taxes which they pay in ordinary consumption. The foreign manufacturers have shown that they can make the goods; it requires time to enable them to make enough to supplant us."

PROTECTIVE DUTIES SHOULD BE REMOVED ENTIRELY.

"The protective system ought to be removed entirely, and not partially. One of the greatest burdens upon our industry is this system. If you were to leave it in ninety-nine articles, and take it off in the hundredth, the party having it taken off in the hundredth would be aggrieved. The protection on corn here affects the cost of produce even in Jamaica.

I am strongly of opinion that all our colonies would be able to compete with the world, and to become exceedingly

prosperous, if they had free-trade offered to them ; and, having granted that boon to them, I think it would be wholly unnecessary to support them by any protection. Of course they must be colonies placed in all respects upon an equal footing with those countries which produce similar commodities. I cannot conceive, that having thirty years ago abolished the slave trade, and now abolished slavery itself, that any question of free trade can arise between Jamaica and Cuba ; Cuba, its abundance of rich soil, not only having the advantage of employing slaves, whatever that may be, but notoriously importing the enormous amount of 40,000 or 50,000 slaves every year ; having in fact the slave trade and slavery, and as the laws of this country have deprived the planter in Jamaica of that means of raising his produce, I conceive that this is a question, like several others, that are entirely taken out of the category of free trade. I think, also, upon the subject of the health of the country, the quarantine laws and regulations, whatever impediments they may throw in the way of trade, assuming that it is only by those regulations we avoid the plague (however doubtful that may be) still, as long as those measures are employed, that is not a question for free trade. These are therefore the cases of national defence, the health of the country and free labour, involving matters of security and morality, which are taken out of the class of free-trade, because they are by the law interfered with, for purposes independent of trade."

#### PROTECTION IN TROPICAL COLONIES.

" The protecting duties in our tropical colonies are not intended for the benefit of any local interests, but are adverse to all. But with regard to such commodities as sugar and coffee, I think the Government of this country must, before long, make up its mind to that measure of protection they will give to our producing colonies, with reference, under all circumstances, to a fair consideration for

the supply of the country with those commodities, by a suitable reduction of the present difference of duty, which is only a prohibition under another name. If it should prove that our own colonies cannot supply this country, in a fair degree, according to the reasonable expectations of the country, then the Government and the public must make up their minds as to the distinction they will make between the productions of slave labour and free labour : what they may be, it is not for me to imagine, but certainly a sum far below the duty which now exists."

#### IMPERIAL DUTIES IN THE COLONIES.

"It is a great mistake our having ever imposed imperial duties in the colonies. I conceive that no money ought to be raised there for revenue by the authority of this country ; and that under a proper supervision from the Government at home, they ought to be allowed to tax themselves, for their fiscal purposes."

#### PROTECTION TO BRITISH SHIPPING.

"I conceive that British shipping, if relieved from all those disadvantages which I attribute to our protective system, would be able to compete with most parts of the globe. I see no reason why British shipping should not have increased in proportion to the increase of the trade unless they are checked by the great charge of outfit, by the duty upon foreign timber, and the consequent high price of English timber in this country, and the high price of provisions. I think that if the British shipping interest were relieved from all impediments of this description, and simply required to build their ships here, and to take a due proportion of British sailors, and left to all their best means of building and fitting out, they would be able to compete in general trade with any country in the world : and certainly with any country capable of becoming a naval power, which is all we should care about.

“ In the building of ships, the expense of timber must be a very great consideration : and the price is enhanced by the high duties. There is a duty of fifty-five shillings a load on foreign oak ; that must raise the price in a great measure, if not entirely, by fifty-five for every load of oak that is cut in this country. The shipowner cannot build so cheap in consequence of this high price of oak : I can remember that some fifteen years ago, by the direction of Mr. Huskisson, I proposed to the shipowners, as from him, that a drawback should be given upon foreign timber used in the building of ships, in the same manner as the duty is given back for the building of churches, and it was presumed, that with that example before us, surveys might be made of the ships before their frames were entirely closed up, and the amount ascertained, but it was objected to by the shipowners of that day. It was offered to them as far as the offer could be made by a minister, that this boon should be granted to them ; but they objected to it, because, they said, it would lead to the building of much cheaper ships afterwards, and that that would be an injury to the shipowners, with their present shipping.”

#### PACKAGES RESTRICTED TO PREVENT SMUGGLING.

“ The system of restricting packages for the importation of high-dutied goods under the belief that it prevented smuggling, is very old, and was some years ago carried to a far greater extent than it is now. It has lately been very much relieved, but still there are many regulations which I think might be relaxed still further, and greater liberty given. For such commodities as spirits and tobacco, when a lugger runs her cargo upon the beach the people come down in scores, with slings contrived on purpose, like harness, to carry off casks, and run up the cliff, and those casks are very soon carried out of sight ; therefore, in those commodities, to fix the packages at such a size that one man shall be unable to carry them off, may perhaps, be still advisable, but the packages at

present demanded are far beyond that, and I see no reason for that excess of size or weight."

#### THE SCHEME OF THE TARIFF.

"A very great amendment might be made in what I would term the scheme of the tariff, I think that a very large number of commodities might be placed together at some exceedingly low and nominal duty, without any injury to the revenue, and with great benefit to the parties importing them, because it would relieve them in many instances from the necessity of warehousing. I think that for the like purpose a reduction of duties might also be made on more productive articles, without much loss; but if it should be held that the revenue could not bear the loss, an exceedingly small increase, and which could hardly be objected to upon a few great articles, would very easily make up the sum. If, for instance, you require 200,000*l.* or 300,000*l.* a year in the customs duties, with a view of accomplishing a more perfect scheme of collection, and that that sum could not be spared, it is very readily seen how easily that might be raised by a half-penny a pound upon tea, a penny a gallon upon wine; a few trifling charges of that kind upon some of the great articles, would give the money which would be requisite."

#### THE REVENUE WOULD NOT BE INJURED BY THE REMOVAL OF PROTECTIVE DUTIES.

"I am not aware of any case in which the revenue would be injured by removing the protective duty. Even diminishing the protection on timber would improve the revenue. I should say so with respect to sugar. You would have a large influx of sugar. There would be a reduction in price, but still a larger quantity of sugar would come in and pay duty. If, for instance, the protecting duty of three guineas the hundred-weight on foreign Muscovado sugar, were reduced so as to be

only 20s. above the duty on plantation sugar, I should not be surprised to see the produce of the sugar duties increased by a million of money."

Those who were acquainted with Mr. Deacon Hume, and aware of the earnestness and sincerity of purpose which always distinguished him, were not surprised at the remarkable boldness with which he gave expression to his convictions before the Committee; hostile as those opinions were to the supposed interests of the existing Government; the effective manner in which he denounced the fallacies of reciprocity; and maintained the great principle that a wise nation ought to reform its own tariff, unfetter its own trade, without inquiring whether other countries would, or would not enter upon the same course of liberality. As a distinguished member of the House of Commons recently remarked to the writer of these pages, "he gave utterance to his opinions before that committee, with a firm adherence to principles which were then so much in advance of the time, that his great practical knowledge, and the ability with which he maintained his views, alone saved him from the charge of Utopianism." When the question was put to him, "Would you remove our own protection without any foreign country removing theirs?" his reply was, "Most certainly, and without even asking them. I dislike all treating excepting upon navigation. I would take what I wanted, and leave them to find the value of our custom." Such was his mode of dealing with these subjects—such was the terseness of his diction. His motto might have

been, "Fac recte, nil time;" for the love of right, and the unfaltering avowal of right, he was equally deserving of honour.

The writer is acquainted with two persons only, who heard his oral testimony before the Import Duties Committee: one, a valuable and intelligent member of it, Mr. Ewart, now member for Dumfries, whose opinion will be given in a future page; the other a banker of liberal opinions, who having paid some attention to the subject of free-trade, had settled down into a decided protectionist. There are few persons, as his most intimate friends affirm, whom after he had formed a decided opinion upon any subject it would be more difficult to bring over to a contrary conviction. But it was effected in this instance; and being convinced, he had the moral courage to confess, that he "could not withstand the evidence of Deacon Hume," who, he said, and continues to say, made him a free-trader.



## CHAPTER X.

## THE EVIL EFFECTS OF PROTECTING DUTIES UPON MORALS AND CIVILIZATION.

## THE LONDON COFFEE-HOUSES.

“FOR the sake of its moral benefit, I know of no achievement,” said Dr. Chalmers, “more urgently desirable than that of a free corn trade. There is not a more fertile topic of clamour and burning discontent all over the land: and were it only effectually set at rest, I am aware of nothing which might serve more to sweeten the breath of British society.” No observation could possibly have been more just. But the remark would have been equally correct, if it had been applied to more limited interests.

It was a part of Mr. Deacon Hume’s suggestion, and it was adopted, that after the Board of Trade authorities, and some leading merchants in London, Liverpool, and other towns, had been examined, some individuals of a very different class of life should be called in, and questioned as to the moral effects of high duties in the articles of coffee, tea, and sugar. The examination of five keepers of the modern coffee-houses,\* afforded a

\* Mr. William Hare, Colonial Coffee-house, 78, Lombard-street; Mr. James Pamphilon, 3 and 4, Sherrard-street, Haymarket; Mr.

curious and interesting aspect of the progress of the new taste which had within a few years grown up among the middle and lower orders for drinking coffee instead of beer and spirits; proving to all, who were open to conviction, how extremely desirable it would be to make good the immense deficiency in the proper supply of coffee by our colonies. It appeared that there were not more than twelve of these coffee-shops in London twenty-five years previous to that date (1840): but that there were then 1,800: that they were increasing at the rate of 100 a year; that the price per cup of coffee is 1*d.* to 3*d.*; and that one of the keepers, who charged 1½*d.* a cup, had from 1,500 to 1,800 persons daily at his house. The witnesses, one and all, complained bitterly of the pressure of the high prices of coffee and sugar on their trade; they said that, if they continued, they should be obliged to raise the price of the first-mentioned article, and so take a step which would have a very bad effect in checking the habit of drinking coffee in preference to beer and spirits. They affirmed on the other hand, that if the duties were lowered, the consumption of coffee would soon be five times greater than it was then, and that this was no extravagant anticipation a political writer contended was shown by the fact, that in Ireland coffee was being sold in the place of whisky in the public houses of the districts which were under Father

J. B. Humphreys, Crown Coffee-house, 41, High Holborn; Mr. Letchford, British Coffee-house, 37, High-street, Bloomsbury; Mr. Rogers, Angel Coffee-house, St. Clements.

Matthew's influence. But as the evidence of these individuals is short, and as interesting as it is instructive, we shall best conduce to the benefit of general readers, thousands of whom never see even the outside of a blue-book, by quoting it with very little abbreviation.

"Mr. William Hare, Mr. James Pamphilon, Mr. J. B. Humphreys, Mr. Thomas Letchford, and Mr. James Rogers, called in and examined.

*Mr. Ewart.* "You are all keepers of coffee-houses in London?"—(*Mr. Hare.*) "We are."

"Is coffee alone consumed, or principally, in your houses?"—(*Mr. Hare.*) "Principally coffee and tea."

"Have the number of coffee-houses in London increased much of late years?"—(*Mr. Humphreys.*) "Very materially: the annual increase has been nearly 100 per annum."

"Do you recollect the time when there were scarcely any coffee-houses in London?"—"Yes: when I was a young man there were not above ten or twelve coffee-houses in London; about twenty-five years ago. There are now, I think, from 1,600 to 1,800. I should think the average increase in the last six years has been about 100 per annum."

"Has the charge for coffee to the consumer been reduced in consequence of this competition?"—"Very materially. About twenty-five years ago there was scarcely a house in London where you could get any coffee under 6*d.* a cup, or 8*d.* a cup: there are now coffee-houses open at from 1*d.* up to 3*d.* There are many houses where the charge is 1*d.* where they have from 700 to 800 persons a day. There is Mr. Pamphilon, who charges 1½*d.* a cup; and he has from 1,500 to 1,600 persons a day."

(*To Mr. Pamphilon.*) "What is the class of persons that

frequent your house?"—"We have all classes. I have three rooms; and the more respectable classes are in the best rooms. We have a great many foreigners."

"What are the hours of opening and of closing coffee-houses?"—"The hours are from four to eleven at night: I open at half-past five and shut up at half-past ten in the evening."

"Do you take in a great number of newspapers and periodicals?"—"Yes: I take in forty-three London daily papers. I have five or six copies of some of them. I have eight copies of the *Morning Chronicle*."

(*Chairman.*) "Is that solely for the use of those who come in to take coffee?"—"Yes: the man who pays 1½*d.* for a cup of coffee can read everything I have there."

"How long is he allowed to remain?"—"An hour, or longer, if he chooses. We take in seven country papers, six foreign papers, twenty-four magazines, four quarterly reviews, and eleven weekly periodicals; and any customer who comes in and has a cup of coffee, for which he pays 1½*d.*, can read anything we have."

(*Mr. Villiers.*) "Is it owing to the lowness of price that you have so many customers?"—"It is owing partly to the attraction of the newspapers and periodicals."

(*Mr. Ewart.*) "Is it not owing, in part, to the change in the habits of society, that the people are more inclined to consume coffee, and sober beverages of that description, than they used to be?"—"Yes: they used to have nothing to go to but a public house."

(*Mr. Villiers.*) "You observe an increasing taste for coffee?"—"Yes: and that has increased with the reduction of price."

"You do not sell spirits at all?"—"Not at all; and we do not even cook a chop or a steak."

(*Chairman.*) "Have you found the desire to read the newspapers increase?"—"Yes."

"What kind of people are they that chiefly frequent your

house?"—"We have a few hackney coachmen; we have post lads from Regent-street, and we have mechanics of all classes. In the best room we have occasionally foreign couriers and some gentlemen that live in the neighbourhood. The majority are artisans."

(*Mr. Ewart*). "There are some coffee-houses entirely devoted to workmen, are there not?"—"Yes, where the price is rather lower, mechanics and labourers."

"Are there many other coffee-houses in London which take a great number of periodicals, besides yours?"—"A great many." (*Mr. Humphreys*). "The amount I used to pay for newspapers, prior to the reduction of the duty, was 400*l.* a year for newspapers, magazines, and the cost of binding the back numbers for the use of my customers."

"No inebriety can possibly occur in your house?"—"No: and I never heard an indecent expression. I have never seen a drunken man in my house, with two exceptions, ever since I have been in Holborn."

"You cannot sell any intoxicating beverage?"—"We are seldom asked for it: we found that it would interfere with the habits of gentlemen who frequent our house for the purpose of taking coffee."

(*Mr. Villiers*). "It is the particular beverage that you sell which is the great attraction to the persons that come to your house?"—"Yes. I have upon the average 400 to 450 persons daily; they are mostly lawyers' clerks and commercial men; some of them are managing clerks, many solicitors, and gentlemen who take coffee in the middle of the day, in preference to a more stimulating drink. I have often asked myself the question, where all that number of persons could possibly have got their refreshment prior to opening my house. There were taverns in the neighbourhood, but no coffee-house, nor anything which afforded accommodation of the nature I now give them; I found that a place of business like mine was so sought for by the public, that shortly after I opened it, I was obliged to increase my

premises in every way that I could; and at the present moment, besides a great number of newspapers every day, I am compelled to take in the highest class of periodicals. We have eight or nine quarterly publications, averaging from four to six shillings, and we are constantly asked for every new work that comes out. There is an increasing taste for a better class of reading. When I first went into business many of my customers were content with the lower priced periodicals; but I find, as time progresses, that the taste is improving, and they look out now for a better class of literature."

(*Mr. Villiers*). "Do you know whether there are any shops which the very lowest class of society resort to for coffee?"  
—"Mr. Letchford keeps a coffee-house in St. Giles's."

(*Chairman to Mr. Letchford*). "How long have you kept that house?"—"Seven years."

"What has been the increase in the number of persons frequenting it?"—"I suppose I have from 700 to 900 a-day frequenting my house."

"Are they chiefly Irish?"—"No. A hard-working class of people."

(*Mr. Villiers*). "To whom the cost of refreshment would be an object?"—"Yes."

(*Chairman*). "What do you charge per cup?"—"My front room is 1*d.*, my back room is 1½*d.*, and my upstairs is 3*d.*"

"How many would each room hold?"—"My front shop will hold about forty-six."

"Do you supply them with bread?"—"Yes."

"They are constantly coming?"—"Constantly."

"Men and women?"—"No women."

"Does a man come and get his breakfast?"—"Yes. He comes in the morning at four o'clock, and has a cup of coffee, a thin slice of bread and butter, and for that he pays 1½*d.*; and then again at eight for his breakfast, he has a cup of coffee, a penny loaf and a pennyworth of butter, which is 3*d.*,

and at dinner-time, instead of going to a public house, at one o'clock, he comes in again, and has his coffee and his bread, and brings his own meat. I do not cook for any one."

(*Chairman*). "Do you sell any beer?"—"No."

"Do you sell any tea?"—"Yes."

"What is the proportion of tea that you use to coffee?"—(*Mr. Humphreys*) "About one third."

"What do you charge for a cup of tea?"—"The trade generally, where they sell coffee at 1½d. a cup, charge 2d. for tea."

(*Mr. Villiers*). "Is there any sugar with the tea and coffee?"—"Yes."

(*Mr. Ewart*). "You have petitioned for a reduction of the duties on sugar and coffee?"—"(*Mr. Hare*). "We have."

(*Chairman*). "Have the prices of coffee lately increased, and has that induced you to raise your prices?"—"They have very much increased: 35 per cent."

"Has there within the last month been an increase in the general charge for coffee in coffee houses?"—"It commences this very day."

"Has there been any meeting lately of the coffee-house keepers, with a view of raising the charge for coffee?"—"Yes; last week."

"What was the result?"—"The result was, that it was unanimously agreed upon at a public meeting, that the trade could no longer afford, from the increased price of coffee and sugar, to serve the lower classes at a penny a cup, and therefore that they must, if they did not alter the price, shut up their houses; and therefore, the lower priced coffee-house keepers solicited a meeting of the trade generally, to see if they could not agree to raising the price, otherwise, the probability is, that during the next month a great number of houses will be compelled to close."

"What price do you pay for the coffee you use?"—"The average price would be about 2s. a pound. When I first commenced business, the coffees that I bought for 48s. in

bond per cwt., I now pay for the same marks about 110s. to 120s."

"Do you buy your coffees in bond?"—"I do. Many of the largest consumers do."

"Then the price of coffee at present is more than double what it was when you commenced business?"—"It is. So much so that my business, in fact, the whole of my profits have been taken away by the increase in price of the raw material."

"Then the present high price must press heavily on that class who have hitherto frequented your houses?"—"That is not the only class on which it presses; it presses severely on the tradesmen who have kept the houses open, because, it being a free trade, we have been competing with others to supply the public at the lowest possible price, and at the sacrifice of our pecuniary interest. In my own instance, being desirous of keeping away opposition, I have kept on my business at the same prices, and furnished the same article, and the consequence has been, that instead of making 300*l.* or 400*l.* a year, I have been barely clearing my expenses. Unless there is a fall in the price of coffee, I must lessen the number of the publications I take in. No tradesman would continue in such a slavish business as ours for a number of years without the prospect of realizing something for himself."

(*Mr. Ewart*). "Would it be a great benefit to the working class to have coffee cheaper than it is?"—"I think the working classes are not fairly dealt with. When we are desirous of opening houses for the accommodation of the working classes, we ought to be put upon as good a footing as the publican. A poor man can go to the public house and get his pint of porter for 1½*d.*, which he is compelled to take standing, and we can afford to make him a cup of coffee for 2*d.*, but, in addition to that, we give him the use of those papers and books to read, and, in my opinion, that has had the effect of materially improving his conduct generally in society."



"Would a reduction of the duties on coffee and on sugar be a great and important advantage to the classes that resort to your house?"—"Most material: and in a moral point of view, as well as with regard to their pecuniary means. My observations apply to sugar as well as coffee."

"What do you now pay for sugar compared with what you paid for the same kind a few years ago?"—"The loaf sugar that I used to buy at 72*s.*, I am now paying 114*s.* for; the moist sugar for which I used to pay 52*s.*, I am now paying 84*s.* to 86*s.*; and we are informed that the price will be higher?"

"Did the great increase in these coffee shops take place after the reduction of the duty on coffee?"—"Principally. I should wish to observe, that it would be a sad thing that a large class of tradesmen, who are calculated to do a great deal of good among the working classes, should be compelled to shut up their houses, or to increase their prices. If they increase their prices, it will limit their accommodation of the poor man. It is a great consideration for the poor man. It is a great consideration for the poor man, in many neighbourhoods, whether he has to pay 1*d.* or 1½*d.* for a cup of coffee. Now he can have a cup for 1*d.*, and a loaf of bread and some butter for 2*d.* more; and he has a warm room to sit in during the whole of the day. Many of them would be driven back to the public houses.

(*Mr. Villiers*). Are you interested in getting all the provisions you supply the public with at as low a rate as possible?"—"Yes. I believe we may trace the teetotal societies, and those societies that advocate temperance for working men, entirely to the establishment of coffee-houses, because a few years ago it used to be almost a matter of ridicule amongst working men to drink coffee: now they are held up to emulate each other."

(*Chairman*). "Are any meetings of temperance societies held in your coffee-houses?" "Yes, always in coffee-houses."

"Are the meetings of any of the trade societies held in

coffee-houses?"—"Not many." (*Mr. Pamphilon*). "There have been one or two societies established in coffee-houses for mechanics." (*Mr. Rogers*). "There are also several benefit clubs held in coffee-houses."

"Then those societies, which formerly met in public houses, are now gradually resorting to coffee-houses?"—"They are, particularly at the east end of the town." (*Mr. Pamphilon*). "I believe that not one-third of my customers ever go into a public house at all. We have an immense trade in the middle of the day." (*Mr. Humphreys*). "I wish to state that latterly the coffee-houses have been compelled to sell meat, ready-cooked meat; people were so desirous of having their meals in houses of this description, that they have come and had their dinner there, as well as their tea and breakfast." (*Mr. Pamphilon*). "We often have a hundred people dining in the middle of the day off cold ham, and meat, and coffee."

"What you have now stated applies to the whole 1,600 or 1,700?"—"Yes; we have one gentleman here who keeps a house of the highest class, and another who keeps a lowest priced house, and mine is a medium price." (*Mr. Hare*). "Mine is a first-class house; they prefer coming to my house for a chop or steak, but they invariably take coffee with it. Bankers' clerks, and persons of that description, find that coffee is refreshing; and, besides, they find they can do their business much better after it than if they took malt liquor."

(*Mr. Ewart*). "Can you state whether coffee-houses have increased in the provincial towns?"—"They have, but not to the same extent: but they are increasing generally over the country." (*Mr. Pamphilon*). "In country places, wherever a person lodges, they cook his victuals, and do everything for him."

(*Sir Charles Douglas*). "From what time do you date the commencement of this trade?"—(*Mr. Hare*). "When I first took the house which I have now, which was nine years ago, we did not cook anything: it has come upon me imperceptibly: many of my customers said, 'We do not like to go to

a tavern; if you will oblige us with a chop in the middle of the day we should be very glad:’ in that way it has gradually gone on: but the commencement was not more than six or seven years ago.” (*Mr. Humphreys.*) “I now sell about three cwt. of cold ham and meat every week, I was first compelled to sell it by persons going to a cook-shop, and buying their meat and bringing it in, and asking me for a plate, and I found it a matter of some little trouble without any profit; it occurred to me that I might as well cook; and I have myself now, in consequence of that, a business the whole of the day. A number of gentlemen come in and have a plate of beef for 4*d.*, a cup of coffee for 2*d.*, and a loaf of bread: and for 6*d.* or 7*d.* they have, what is for them, a good breakfast. In fact, a gentleman may come to my house and have as good a breakfast for 8*d.* as he can have in any hotel for 18*d.*”

The Manchester Chamber of Commerce observed in their report, in 1841, that the enormous amount levied upon the community, by being obliged to pay for their sugar, coffee, timber, and corn, higher prices than the same articles may be purchased at in the markets of the world, almost exceeded belief.

The Committee on the Import Duties, which sat only ten days, shortly after made a report, which “sealed the fate of our superannuated tariff.” It endorsed the statement of Mr. Deacon Hume, at the commencement of his evidence, respecting the complication and inequality of the table of duties, by reporting that “the tariff of the United Kingdom presents neither congruity nor unity of purpose; no general principles seem to have been applied.” That the tariff often “aimed at incompatible ends.” Duties were sometimes meant to

be "both productive of revenue and for protective objects, which are frequently inconsistent with each other; hence they sometimes operate to the complete exclusion of foreign produce, and in so far no revenue can of course be received; and sometimes, when the duty is inordinately high, the amount of revenue becomes in consequence trifling. They do not make the receipt of revenue the main consideration, but allow that primary object of fiscal regulations to be thwarted by an attempt to protect a great variety of particular interests, at the expense of the revenue, and of the commercial intercourse with other countries." They also reported the tariff as having been made "subordinate to many small producing interests at home, by the sacrifice of revenue in order to support their interests." That the principle of preference by the various discriminatory duties was largely applied to the produce of our colonies, colonial interests being favoured at the expense of the mother country. The evidence which had been given respecting the articles of sugar and coffee was pointed at as conclusive as examples of the operation of these prohibitive duties. It was added that the monopoly granted to British colonial sugars had so enormously raised the prices in our market, that they had lately come into consumption though charged with a duty of 63s. per cwt., while our plantation sugars paid only 6s. The Committee expressed their belief that the effect of *prohibitory* duties, while they were wholly unproductive to the revenue, is to impose an indirect tax on the consumer,

often equal to the entire difference of price between the British article and the foreign article, which the prohibition excludes. That on articles of food alone, the amount taken from the consumer exceeds the amount of all the other taxes which are levied by the Government. That the sacrifices of the community are not limited by the loss of revenue, but are accompanied by injurious effects upon wages and capital; diminishing greatly the productive powers of the country, and limiting our active trading relations.

Similar was the testimony respecting *protective duties*, imposing upon the consumer a tax equal to the amount of the duties levied upon the foreign article, while it also increases the price of all the competing home-produced articles to the same amount as the duty; but the increased price does not go to the treasury, but to the protected manufacturer. That these high protective duties check importation, are unproductive to the revenue; while profit to the trader, benefit to the consumer, and the fiscal interests of the country, are all sacrificed by heavy import duties impeding the interchange of commodities with other nations.

After animadverting upon the evil effects of the protective system on manufacture and labour, the Committee gave expression to the following important admission:—

“Several witnesses have expressed the utmost willingness to surrender any protection they have from the tariff, and disclaim any benefit resulting from that protection; and in investigating the subject as to the amount of duties levied on the plea of protection to British manufactures, your committee

have to report that the amount does not exceed half a million sterling: and some of the manufacturers, who are supposed to be most interested in retaining those duties, are quite willing they should be abolished, for the purpose of introducing a more liberal system into our commercial policy."

The report closed with the following recommendation:—

"The committee have thought themselves warranted in reporting their strong conviction of the necessity of an immediate change in the import duties of the kingdom: and should Parliament sanction the views which your Committee entertain upon these most important matters: they are persuaded that by imposts on a small number of those articles which are now most productive, the amount of each impost being carefully considered with a view to the greatest consumption of the article, and thereby the greatest receipt to the customs, no loss would occur to the revenue, but, on the contrary, a considerable augmentation might be confidently anticipated.

"The simplification they recommend would not only vastly facilitate the transactions of commerce, and thereby benefit the revenue, but would at the same time greatly diminish the cost of collection, remove multitudinous sources of complaint and vexation, and give an example to the world at large, which, emanating from a community distinguished above all others for its capital, its enterprise, its intelligence, and the extent of its trading relations, could not but produce the happiest effects; and consolidate the great interests of peace and commerce, by associating them intimately and permanently with the prosperity of the whole family of nations."

The report, with the evidence upon which it was founded, was no sooner printed than, as Mr. Deacon Hume and his friends observed with the greatest interest, it attracted attention. In one instance the entire subject was earnestly recommended to the consideration of

another select committee, of which Sir Robert Peel, Sir James Graham, Lord Sandon, and Mr. Herries should be members. It was urged that the reform of the poor-laws was a more difficult task than the reform of the customs duties, but that the main difficulties were overcome by submitting it to the investigation and judgment of the leading men of both parties. The like result it was argued would be attained with regard to the so strongly called-for reform of our economical legislation. Though this advice, and the quarter from which it came, was influential, it was passed by unheeded. The blue-book in the meanwhile was effecting great things. It had attracted the notice of other countries. Sir John Bowring, with much satisfaction, announced in Parliament that it had been translated into Spanish. It became the text-book of our legislators, and no inconsiderable number of the members of both houses of Parliament fairly went to school upon it. It was the subject of constant observation and discussion in the columns of the leading reviews, as well as of the ordinary public journals. The author of an able article in the *Examiner*, on the 22nd of January, 1842, having noticed the desire which had been expressed by a political writer for some such evidence as the blue-book which we have been noticing affords, remarked, "he may gratify his desire by perusing the Report of the Import Duties Committee, and the Committee on East India Produce of last year. He may usefully employ himself in considering the Reformed Tariff of Mr. Macgregor, the present Secretary of the Board of

Trade. He will not fail to study also, we trust, the very able evidence of, unhappily now the late, Mr. Deacon Hume, whose long life of official labour appears thus to have well closed in bequeathing a legacy of enlightened principles to his country—the result alike of great experience, and of a mind as upright as it was clear and powerful.”

Although Sir Robert Peel still resisted the motions which were made by the advocates of free-trade, it was observed that the report and the evidence had made an impression upon him. He had previously admitted that the statement that the condition of the labourer had been rendered worse by the operation of the corn law was “a most important one;” and he had “no hesitation in saying, that unless the existence of the corn law could be shown to be consistent, not only with the prosperity of agriculture and the maintenance of the general interests of the country, but also, and especially, with the improvement of the condition of the labouring class, it was practically at an end.” From time to time he continued to make admissions which rendered the Protectionists visibly uneasy, though they did not openly acknowledge it, and the abolitionists proportionably sanguine with respect to the issue. From the year 1840 to 1846 he continued to quote frequently from the Report, and especially from the evidence of Mr. Hume. On the 9th of February, 1842, we find him saying in his speech on the corn laws—

“Taking next the consumption of wheat, I find that Mr. Deacon Hume states the consumption of this country, to be



one quarter of wheat for each person. Dr. Bowring calculates that 24,000,000 of inhabitants of Great Britain consume 45,000,000 quarters of all kinds of grain. I beg the House to recollect, that I take the estimate of two gentlemen possessed of ample means of information, and entertaining views upon this question which free their testimony from all suspicion. Mr. Deacon Hume made our consumption one quarter of wheat per head. The honourable gentleman (Dr. Bowring) allows nearly two quarters of grain to each individual. In the Prussian states, he says, 14,000,000 of inhabitants consume 13,000,000 quarters of grain, being less than one quarter to each person. Again, while Mr. Deacon Hume allows one quarter of grain which he assigns to each individual in Prussia, three fourths at least consists of rye. Throughout the Prussian States, the consumption of rye and wheat, he says, is in the proportion of from three and four to one. In 124 towns of the leagues, he estimates the consumption per head at 65 lbs. of wheat, and 241 lbs. of rye ; that is to say, each individual consumes very little more than one bushel of wheat, instead of one quarter. In England, the honourable gentleman states the consumption of tea at 1 lb. per head annually ; in the Prussian States salt, he says, is 16½ lbs. in Prussia, and 22 lbs. in England. . . . My argument goes to show, that it is not fair to appeal to the diminished price of food in other countries as proving increased comfort in the people in proportion as the article is low priced."

It was not, however, until nearly two years after the Report of the Import Duties Committee had been printed, that it bore fruit, in the shape of a substantial measure. On the 10th of May, 1842, Sir Robert Peel, in a very characteristic speech, introduced his scheme for a revision of the tariff, and for a very extensive alteration of the Customs' Acts. The proposals which it

embodied, with the exception of the article of corn, which the Minister, through four subsequent years, held to be an exception to the general rule, were, as far as they went, very nearly what Mr. Deacon Hume had recommended. He disclaimed on his own part, and on the part of the Government, any undue credit for the proposals which he was about to submit, reminding the House of the labours of the Committee on Importations, the valuable evidence it had collected, the degree of attention which had consequently been drawn to the state of the tariff and importation duties, recorded his opinion that it had established a considerable claim upon public gratitude. The object of his own measure, he continued, would be to simplify the existing law. It was generally admitted that it was in many respects obscure and inconsistent, that there were duties applicable to particular articles which were irreconcilable with principle. He thought that a great part of the anomalies and inconsistencies arose from the practice of an indiscriminate duty being applied to various articles. His object would be to remove all absolute prohibitions upon the import of foreign articles, and to reduce duties which were too high to admit of fair competition with domestic produce. His object was to make the duties such that they might be really levied and assist the revenue. The duty on the raw materials used for manufactures in this country was not to exceed five per cent. On articles partially manufactured the duty was to be about twelve per cent., and on complete manufactures not above twenty per

cent. Oxen, sheep, and other agricultural produce, which had previously been prohibited, were to be admitted at a moderate rate of duty—it amounted, for instance, to fifteen shillings for each cow, and three shillings for each sheep. A great number of articles were enumerated, the duties upon which were, in some instances, to be lowered 100 per cent. Amongst the articles which he dealt with, were clover and grass seeds, onions, foreign woods, especially mahogany; iron, lead, and copper; spermaceti, train, and bladder oil; dye-stuff and drugs; foreign meat, rice, straw-plait, and other articles. Upon approaching the subject of a reduction of duty on timber he observed—

“The more I consider this subject, the more firmly I hold the opinion that we are about to confer an important benefit on the consumer, by the relinquishment of a certain amount—a very great amount I admit, of revenue. Here I may be allowed to support my views by a dictum of Mr. Deacon Hume, who observed—‘We have abundance of untaxed coal; abundance of untaxed iron; we only want abundance of untaxed wood, in order to be provided cheaply with the three great primary raw materials of employment and industry.’ That was the opinion, shortly expressed, of Mr. Deacon Hume, with respect to the great advantages of a reduction of duty on this article. I am afraid we cannot confer on the consumer the benefit of untaxed wood; I wish we could; but a total reduction of duty would be, I think, unwise. To admit an unlimited competition with the colonies in an article of so much importance to them, would be a course open to grave objection. But the arrangement ultimately to import colonial timber free from duty, will keep in check any demand which might be made upon you, in the event of your being disposed to afford additional facilities for the importation of Baltic timber.”

The new tariff produced considerable discontent, especially amongst the landowners. The free-traders, who viewed the measure as a step in the right direction, endeavoured to get the duties on articles from foreign countries reduced to a level with those which were brought from the colonies. The protectionists regarded the measure as an abandonment of their interests.

On the fifth night's debate upon the distress of the country, Lord Howick's motion, the premier replied to a part of Mr. Cobden's speech in the following terms:—

“‘But,’ says the honourable gentleman, ‘you reduce the price of timber when there are no factories to build;’ as if there were nothing else in the world but factories. I do not undervalue the importance of factories; but to say that when bridges, houses, and various other buildings, are always to be constructed or repaired, no advantage is derived in the great reduction of the price of timber, simply because no additional cotton mills are required, is an argument which only indicates that the honourable gentleman's notions of commercial prosperity, and the happiness of the nation, all centre in the erection of cotton mills throughout the country. I think I can establish the importance of the alteration, by the words of Mr. Deacon Hume, for there was no one article to which he attached greater importance than timber. He said, ‘You have coal and iron cheap; make timber cheap too, and you have the three great elements of commercial prosperity.’”

Again, on the 17th June, 1844, on the order of the day being read, for the House to resolve itself into Committee on the Sugar Duties Bill, after stating that he had always been of opinion that the ordinary considerations which determine matters of financial and commercial policy do not apply to the particular article

of sugar, there occurs the most pointed testimony of all to the subject of this volume.

“Whether the views we still entertain upon this subject be well founded or not, at least they are consistent views—views which we held, which we avowed, and acted upon when we were opposed to the right honourable gentleman.\* They appeared to receive a sanction also from the very high authority of one whose name I have never mentioned without accompanying it with professions of respect for his opinions on all matters of finance, I mean Mr. Deacon Hume. That gentleman was the advocate of the removal of the restrictions on the trade in corn, and he was the decided opponent of the protective system : he was the authority of all others who has given the most express and positive opinions, deriving great weight from his official situation and connection with the Government in favour of unrestricted commerce and the abolition of protection. Mr. Hume himself excepted this article of sugar and the slave trade from the ordinary principles which should govern the commercial regulations. He said, ‘I cannot conceive after having thirty years ago abolished the slave trade, and after having abolished slavery itself, that any question of free-trade can arise respecting Cuba with her abundance of rich soil—not only having the advantage of a population of slaves, but notoriously importing the enormous amount of 40,000 to 50,000 slaves annually, having in fact the slave-trade and slavery. When the law has deprived the planter of the means of raising his produce, I consider the question as altogether taken out of the category of free-trade.’ Those were the opinions of Mr. Deacon Hume, delivered so recently as the year 1840. He was the advocate of the abolition of all restrictions. Her Majesty’s Government entertain the same opinion. They think, that to expose the British planter, who has neither the advantage, if it be an advantage, of slavery, nor still less of the slave-trade, to the

\* Mr. Labouchere, President of the Board of Trade.

necessity of competing with Brazil and Cuba, spots the most favoured by nature for the production of sugar—the parts of the world containing probably the most of rich and virgin soil, and with a climate peculiarly adapted to the production of sugar: we entertain Mr. Hume's opinion—that if you prohibit the slave-trade and abolish slavery, it requires the most mature consideration before you subject the British planter to competition with countries possessed of such facilities for increased production.”

In the Session of 1845, further reductions in the revenue duties were effected. The tax upon sugar was lessened; but still there was a higher duty on the produce of foreign countries than on that of our own colonies, which dissatisfied the free-traders. The duty on glass was entirely repealed, and the exciseman banished, so far as that article of manufacture was concerned. The duty on 430 different imported articles on which the duties were trifling, bringing little to the revenue, while they were very troublesome to officers and merchants in the collection, were repealed by a single act.

## CHAPTER XL.

NOTIONS ON BIOGRAPHY—MR. DISRAELI QUOTED—SIR R. PEEL'S SYMPATHY WITH THE CREATIONS OF OTHERS—HIS RESPECT FOR MR. DEACON HUME'S OPINIONS ON FINANCE—HIS INFLUENCE—DIFFICULTIES—EXERTIONS—MR. HUME'S SCHEME FOR LIFE INSURANCE FOR THE WORKING CLASSES—HIS USEFULNESS—HIS UNOSTENTATIOUS CAREER—HIS DEATH—SIR ROBERT PEEL'S ALLUSION TO IT IN PARLIAMENT.

“*Multis ille bonis flebilis occidit.*”—HOR.

“OUR notions,” says an able writer, “upon the subject of biography, may be extravagant; but if an individual is really of consequence enough to have his life and character recorded for public remembrance, we have always been of opinion that the public ought to be made acquainted with all the inward springs and relations of his character. How did the world and the man's life, from his particular position, modify him from without; how did he modify these from within? With what endeavours and what efficiency rule over them? With what resistance and what sufferings sink under them? In a word, what and how produced, was his effect upon society? He who should answer these questions in regard to any individual would, we believe, furnish a model of perfection in biography.” We

have from the outset endeavoured, at least, to profit by these suggestive observations, and we shall continue to do so, though our success may be very imperfect.

The passages which were quoted in the foregoing chapter from the debates in Parliament, clearly show how highly Sir Robert Peel—and few statesmen ever measured men so accurately—estimated Mr. Deacon Hume's opinions upon matters of finance, as well as the influence which he was exercising over the mind of the Minister.

Mr. Disraeli has remarked in his life of Lord George Bentinck, that Sir Robert Peel "had a dangerous sympathy with the creations of others." That "there was always some person representing some theory or system exercising an influence over him." That "in his sallet days, it was Mr. Horner or Sir Samuel Romilly; in later, and more important periods, it was the Duke of Wellington, the King of the French, Mr. Jones Loyd, some others, and finally Mr. Cobden." If Mr. Disraeli had been obliged to name the persons whom he included in the words "some others," the writer has little doubt, though he has no authority for saying it, that he would have mentioned the subject of these pages.

We have already remarked that Sir Robert Peel, in theory, was always a free-trader, though cautious, probably from feeling that he was not free to act, so long as he continued to be the leader of the Tory party; but there was the gradual deepening of his convictions brought about by his habit of proceeding to act only upon actual and matured facts, which demanded for



each great process, consideration, time, and unceasing physical exertion.

Although Mr. Deacon Hume had now retired from the duties of office into private life, he had retained his disposition, as occasion required, to be useful to his country. He was consequently rarely unoccupied, and too often he was occupied unduly. Forty-nine years of public service did not enable him, as many may have supposed, to retire to a life of leisure, much less to a life of ease. He had to contend with difficulties and anxieties. His agricultural speculations had, owing to circumstances over which he had no control, been very disadvantageous; and the responsibilities in which the laws of partnership sometimes entangle even the most prudent, at one time threatened to involve him in serious embarrassment. A railway company with which he was concerned, was suddenly paralyzed, mainly by the failure of a bank; and such it was then discovered were the terms of the company's Act, that any one of the shareholders was liable to make good the loss which the failure of the bank occasioned. However, as it often happens, when individuals endowed with minds of a vigorous order, are suddenly thrown into difficulty, they instantly begin to act for themselves with a resolution which appears like a new faculty. So it was in the present instance. Mr. Hume at once applied himself with energy, albeit not without intervals of apprehension and despondency, to redeem a concern the prospects of which were exceedingly gloomy. Nor was he unsuccessful. An Act of Par-

liament was at length obtained by which the liability was distributed; and so greatly did his exertions change the character of affairs, that not only was his own property, but the property of others, secured from threatened ruin. For years, it is true, it ceased to pay a dividend; but this state of things terminated in course of time; and had his life been spared, he would have witnessed its growing prosperity.

We have already mentioned the importance which Mr. Hume attached to life assurance, and that he might be considered as one of the founders of the "Atlas," and of the "Customs Benevolent Fund." It should be also mentioned, that he often expressed a desire that some scheme of life insurance, or rather, against the privations of age, should be introduced for the working classes under the sanction of Government. He thought that this might be effected in connection with the poor law unions. His plan was, that the young and middle-aged should contribute in such a manner, that as years advanced the payments should diminish, so that they should cease altogether at a certain age. That at a more remote period the funds should be a source of benefit to the subscriber, who, when he had arrived at an age when he could no longer work, should be entitled to a maximum allowance. Those useful institutions called Penny Banks, though they would, in one respect, have very inadequately fulfilled the conceptions of Mr. Hume, were not established until several years after his death. We may add, that he strongly objected to the practice of Friendly Societies meeting at public houses;

and when he resided at Pinner, he carried out his views by making it a fundamental law of a friendly society which he established there, that it never should meet at a public house.

It would be impossible at this period of time to ascertain how many plans for the public good he either originated, or was mainly instrumental in carrying into effect; or the amount of influence which he exercised over the minds of others in matters of lesser, as well as in those of greater moment. The labour which he underwent, and the good that he did, so far from being paraded upon platforms, was effected in the most unostentatious manner. While life remained, his calm, yet active mind,

“Nor made a pause, nor felt a void.”

That time, however, which comes to all, and often, as in his case, with little or no warning of its approach, was at hand, and an end was to be put to all his labours.

On Wednesday the 12th of January, 1842, at Great Doods House, Reigate, in the sixty-ninth year of his age, after an illness of some weeks, from which nothing serious had been apprehended until the previous Monday, when he was seized with stupor of an apoplectic character from which he never aroused, Mr. Deacon Hume was removed by death to the deep regret of his family and friends, as well as of a wide circle of public men. His decease was not remotely attributable to over-exertion and anxiety, the after effects of a mind over-taxed. Dr. Gordon, in compliance with a special intimation,

immediately left town for Reigate, but all the hope which he could hold out, was comprised in the not very encouraging words, "He may possibly recover." His death was noticed by several of the leading public journals, in terms which were as just, as they were gratifying to all who knew him. The remark, however, of Dr. Johnson, in one of his "Lives," ought ever to be borne in mind, for in no instance is it inapplicable. "We have little reason to boast of our knowledge, when we, after all, only gaze and wonder at the surface of things. When the most arrogant philosopher knows not how a grain of corn is generated, or why a stone falls to the ground! But were our knowledge far greater than it is, let us yet remember that goodness, not knowledge, is the happiness of man! The day will come—it will come quickly—when it shall profit us more to have subdued one proud thought, than to have numbered the host of heaven!"

Sir Robert Peel at the meeting of Parliament, took an opportunity of alluding to the death of Mr. Hume in a very feeling manner, speaking of his decease as "a loss which he was sure the House would sincerely deplore."\* It could not be said of him, "*Tum occidit, cum lugere facilius rempublicam posset, si viveret, quam juvare,*" that he died at a time when it would have been more easy for him to feel sorrow for his country than to do it service if he had lived; for what a conspicuous and important part might he yet have played! But it was not to be.

\* February 9, 1842.

His remains were interred in a vault near the north-east corner of Reigate churchyard; the funeral, as he certainly would have desired, and such instances we are happy to witness are constantly becoming more frequent and in the highest stations, was "without ostentation or parade of any kind."\* Man, "whose breath is in his nostrils," and who, as Sir Thomas Browne expresses it, "is made out of an extract of the earth," whatever may have been his condition during life, or however distinguished, ought to be neither "splendid in ashes," nor "pompous in the grave."

Mr. Deacon Hume had twelve children, of whom eight daughters lived to be women: Charlotte, deceased, who married the late Whitlock Nicholl, Esq., M.D., of Charles Street, Berkeley Square, London; Caroline, who married Hassard Hume Dodgson, Esq., M.A.; Isabella, who married Lieutenant-Colonel Poole, Native Bombay Cavalry; Anna, who married the late Rev. C. David Badham, M.D., Oxon., formerly Ratchliffe Travelling Fellow; Ellen, who married the Rev. Charles Badham, M.A., Vicar of All Saints, Sudbury, Suffolk. Three daughters remain unmarried. Mrs. Hume survived her husband several years. She died at East Bergholt in Suffolk, on the 31st of May 1854, in the eighty-first year of her age.

\* The wishes which were expressed by Queen Adelaide, and Sir Robert Peel, whose words we have quoted, have been very influential in all classes of society. We entirely agree with those who were of opinion that had there been less parade and less upholstery exhibited in the funeral of the Duke of Wellington it would have accorded better with the spirit of Christianity, as well as with the simplicity of character which distinguished him.

## CHAPTER XII.

PARALLEL BETWEEN MR. HUME AND MR. CLARKSON — DAVID HUME, HIS POLITICAL DISCOURSES — FORESTALLING AND REGRATING — REMARKS OF LORD JOHN RUSSELL — FREE-TRADE DOCTRINES OF ENGLISH NOT OF FRENCH ORIGIN — MR. HUME'S LONG-CONTINUED EXERTIONS — HIS CAUTION — APPLICATION OF PRINCIPLES — THE ANTI-CORN LAW LEAGUE — MR. CORDEN — SIR ROBERT PEEL'S ADVANCES — THE OPPOSITION HE ENCOUNTERED — FREE-TRADE, AT FIRST, NOT A PARTY QUESTION — SIR ROBERT PEEL'S STATEMENT — MR. GLADSTONE QUOTED — CORN LAWS REPEALED — BENEFITS RESULTING — NAVIGATION LAWS REPEALED — BURTON'S LIFE OF DAVID HUME QUOTED — MR. MACGREGOR.

“The time shall come when free as seas or wind,  
 Unbounded Thames shall flow for all mankind,  
 Whole nations enter with each swelling tide;  
 And seas but join the regions they divide:  
 Earth's distant ends our glory shall behold,  
 And the new world launch forth to seek the old.”

POPE.

THE only discouragement which the writer has met with in the composition of this biography, was conveyed in the remark, that the name of the subject of it is almost exclusively associated with a bygone topic, and that people are apt to kick down the ladder after they have reached the top. He felt, however, that he ought not to take ingratitude for granted. With reference to

bygone subjects, what is all history but a record of past transactions and events? And who is there, possessing an ordinary measure of intelligence, that does not deem it an interesting and instructive employment, after he has reached the goal, to review the past, to recount the toils of combat, and the labours of the way?

The writer has been accustomed to contend, that Mr. Deacon Hume stood very much in the same relation to Mr. Huskisson, upon the subject of free trade, that Mr. Thomas Clarkson did to Mr. Wilberforce with respect to the slave trade. Neither Mr. Wilberforce nor Mr. Clarkson, it is true, were ever in office, whereas both Mr. Huskisson and Mr. Hume were officially connected with successive governments. But, whatever may be the degree of correctness in the parallel, no well-informed economist entertains a doubt, that Mr. Deacon Hume's exertions largely contributed to that great change of opinion respecting commercial matters, which finally enabled the advocates of free-trade to effect so much. That the British African slave-trade owed its fall, in a great measure, to the exertions of Mr. Clarkson, is now matter of history. If, however, he had not laboured as he did, it is pretty clear, looking at the state of public opinion since, that what was accomplished in 1807, could not have been resisted for many years. Clarkson was never supported by more than a section of the press; whereas, had the attention which the slave-trade with difficulty attracted, been delayed for a season, the press would have been nearly unanimous. "We have lately purchased *Negro* Emancipation,

let us make a similar, and far easier, effort to purchase *Corn Emancipation*," was the frequent remark of Mr. Deacon Hume. "But what great legislative improvement has not been met by fierce opposition and numerous predictions of mischief? It was not without repeated struggles that Mr. Wilberforce was enabled to secure even the admission of Christian missionaries into British India. The slave-trade was obstinately defended. For many years the apprehensions of West Indian planters and merchants riveted the fetters of the slave; and, even to this day, the fears excited by Roman Catholic Emancipation, and by the Reform Act, have not wholly subsided."\* If other great improvements have given rise to visionary alarms, who will be surprised to find that the change respecting the corn-laws has proved visionary also? "If, in other processes of industry, competition, though strongly deprecated, has proved advantageous, it may surely also be serviceable in the production of corn, and lead generally to a more scientific and productive cultivation of the land." A far higher authority has remarked, that "a depreciation in the price of corn may be counterpoised by increased production, consequent upon the improved management of farms, and the employment of additional labour. The history of monopoly shows, that it acts as a discouragement to improvement, and the farmer is not an exception to the general rule; it tends to make him rest contented with a slovenly system of cultivation, because it is

\* The Hon. and Rev. Baptist W. Noel's "Plea for the Poor, and abolition of the Corn Laws."



cheap, under the belief that the diminished quantity of produce consequent thereon, will be compensated by increased price."

Possibly there may be persons who would hesitate in attributing the revolution, which, within a few years, has taken place with reference to the system of prohibitory and protective duties, either to the influence of Mr. Deacon Hume, or to any single individual. The subject of these pages, the writer is aware, has in some instances, been spoken of as one of the authors of the doctrine of free-trade, which is obviously incorrect. Had it been said that he was one of its earliest advocates—that he, more than any other person, practically applied in its doctrines originating free trade measures, the statement would in no degree have exceeded the truth. David Hume, the author of the "Political Discourses," and of the "History of England," "was beyond all doubt the *author* of the modern doctrines which now rule the world of science, which are to a great extent the guide of practical statesmen, and are only prevented from being applied in their fullest extent to the affairs of nations, by the clashing of interests and the ignorant prejudices of certain powerful classes; for no one deserving the name of legislator, pretends to doubt the soundness of the theory, although many hold that the errors of our predecessors require a slow recourse to right principle in conducting the practical business of the world."\*

\* Lord Brougham's *Lives of Men of Letters*, page 176: in which the following remarks also occur.—"Dr. Smith's celebrated work, with

The time has not long since gone by when the laws against forestalling and regrating\* existed, the popular fear respecting which Adam Smith remarked, "could only be compared to the popular terrors and suspicions of witchcraft."† Those laws, of the very existence of which, but for the Statute Book, some doubt might be entertained, were once deemed the pillars of our commercial prosperity. Until the year 1772, it was penal to buy any standing crops, or purchase corn for the purpose of selling it again at the market; no one could purchase it before it came to market; there was to be no middle man. And incorrigible offenders were to be put in the pillory, or imprisoned during the king's pleasure. The object, as Lord Brougham once said, was that the tenant-farmer should come to market and sell his corn cheap to the people. The statute book was directly opposed to that admirable law of society which metes out sustenance to the people in proportion to the supply of the year by the intervention of the corn-dealer. All was of a piece with the story of the "wicked bakers," who, as the Duke of Rutland in the year 1610 maintained, were always raising the price of bread. Lord John Russell contended upon one occasion with considerable humour, that the case of the protectionist advocates was contained in the antique letter above mentioned, and

all its great merits, is less of a regular system than the detached Essays of Hume. The originality of the latter's opinions is wholly undeniable: they were published full fourteen years before the 'Wealth of Nations.'

\* 5 & 6 Edward VI. c. 14.

† 'Wealth of Nations,' vol. ii. p. 412.

it was clear they had not, even in the year 1846, abandoned the argument; for the House had been told that potatoes in Yorkshire were two shillings a bushel, but that wicked potato factors in London would not sell them so cheaply; and that Yorkshiremen, who were thought to be quicksighted, though they possessed them in abundance, did not send them to market where they could get ten times the price they obtained in the country." A more absurd idea, as most men are now persuaded, was never seriously entertained, and Mr. Deacon Hume, who had a keen sense of the ridiculous, treated such arguments in a similar vein. He was also often accustomed to remark how unreasonable it was to defend the corn-laws by appeals to antiquity and the wisdom of our ancestors, the worst authority to appeal to in commercial legislation. With the changes, he would say, which are constantly taking place in manufactures, in wealth, in the means of communication, and with the increase of population, what can be more idle than to talk of going back to the reign of Edward IV? If Mr. Hume had been living in the year 1846, he would have seen, without surprise, how completely even the eloquence of the Earl of Derby failed to maintain the position.\* The former did not require to

\* That eloquence was never more powerfully exerted than on the night of the 25th of May, 1846. On that occasion, too, the noble Earl, almost in the spirit of an antiquarian, quoted from the "Paston Letters" a passage, written at the period to which we have referred, by Dame Margaret Paston to her son Sir John, stating that malt was very dear, that wheat was 8s. 8d. a quarter, that the King had prohibited the exportation of wheat; and ending with the remark, "I fear we shall have a right strange world."

be told that the corn laws were an experiment, and that the natural condition of commerce was a state of freedom. He knew that not until the landed interest became all powerful in Parliament was the idea of protection acted upon; and that when it was introduced it was with the avowed object of keeping up the rent of the land. That not only did the act of the twelfth year of the reign of Charles II. impose duties upon the importation of corn, but that the act which was passed in the fifteenth year of the same reign increased these duties. That the system of bounties also upon exportation in the reign of William and Mary, perpetrated great injustice, since, not only was the price of food increased, but a tax was laid upon the people for the advantage of the landowners. Under this system, exportation naturally took place to a very great extent. As much as seven millions of money were paid in the shape of bounties, and upwards of 2,000,000 quarters of wheat were exported. Owing, probably, to an increase of population, in 1750 exportation began to decrease, and from that period it went on constantly diminishing until this became an importing country, and such it had continued, and increasingly so, ever since. Nevertheless, it was not until the year 1771 that, since the first introduction of corn laws, there was any free-trade in this kingdom. It is a remarkable historical circumstance that from the year 1773 to 1815, with the exception of a few brief intervals, the importation of corn was virtually free. As instructive a coincidence is that which Dr. Adam Smith points out, when, without marking the

cause, he mentions this period as a time when there was a great start in our commercial prosperity. Since that period all our legislation, with the exception of the Corn Bills of 1815 and 1828, tended towards a free-trade in our commercial relations.

The progress of unrestricted commercial policy was not unnaturally of slow growth. The doctrines of free-trade, as Mr. Horner once remarked, "instead of being, as some alleged, mere plagiarisms from those of the French economists, were the original growth of our own country, from which they were borrowed by the economists of France."\* The first principles, as enunciated by the great English historian, extended and combined by Dr. Adam Smith, were matured in the recesses of many minds, among the foremost that of Mr. Deacon Hume, who was ever energetically urging their application to a boundless range of subjects, many of which were advocated in Parliament, with a seasonable amount of caution, by Mr. Huskisson, when there were very few who agreed with him. It may be doubted whether he saw his way so clearly through the subject as Mr. Deacon Hume. Mr. Huskisson's principles were more limited in their application. It is true that the country, during his time, would not have borne more than he advocated. Mr. Deacon Hume was in advance of his chief, and very considerably of his age. Influential as was his official position, it was obviously not without its drawbacks. The Secretary must, of course, be altogether subordinate

\* Memoirs of Francis Horner, vol. ii. p. 494.

to the President, and to the Government; and however much he may desire it, his own views cannot prevail, unless he is able to produce, in the all-responsible quarter, a complete conviction of their truth. And this, under adverse circumstances, could rarely be effected. Mr. Hume had accepted office upon the understanding that it was financial rather than political, and that it would be unaffected by any change of ministry. He was fortunate, upon the whole, as regards the Presidents under whom he successively served; but the Governments, beginning with the Duke of Wellington's, in 1828, were unmistakeably hostile. He, however, never ceased to enforce his views privately upon those who were in authority, and with what interest he watched any opening for so doing will be seen in the following extract from a letter to a friend, written soon after Lord Grey had succeeded to power:—

“I am under an engagement to Lord Auckland to draw up, in something of a connected form, the various lucubrations which I have wasted upon his predecessors. Corn is among them; and I can tell you, if I have not done so before, that I have never concealed my opinion from my masters on that subject. The present occupiers of these places are entitled to hear what I have to say upon the corn question, before I adopt a different channel; but if they shrug the shoulder, and say, ‘we cannot touch corn,’ and they have almost said so, then another channel must be chosen.

“As to Lord Grey's speech, I do not think that it will be much in the way, if good intentions are entertained. He says he ‘has not nerves to try the fearful experiment of free-trade in corn.’ Very well: but his nerves may be braced,

and his fears may be removed. I think that the putting it upon such an issue is not setting the question in a hopeless form.

“Your colleague has prepared me to expect that Sir James Graham will desire me to explain my views on the corn question to him. I shall certainly not mince the matter if he does. Such a convert would be a host. I almost think that you might have used the cream of what I have to say, perhaps more appropriately to Mr. Canning, than what you took on currency.

“Surely Lord Althorp is right with us. ‘His heart is as my heart :’ and, if so, his calibre will not be of much importance. His character for honesty of intention will enable him to be very useful. The difficult thing will be to convince the farmers and agricultural labourers that they are not about to be sacrificed.”

Whenever also he had an opportunity of expressing his opinion *publicly*, which, from the nature of his office, was a rare occurrence, he never failed to give utterance to it in decided terms. This, in fact, has been shown by the extracts we have already given from his evidence before Parliamentary committees; and in some instances he expressed himself as having desired to go beyond what Mr. Huskisson had proposed. “Mr. Huskisson’s object,” he observed upon one of these occasions, “was to open our ports for new commodities, with the intention of placing rated duties upon any goods which might be brought in in large quantities, and might be deemed worthy of being named in the tariff; but it appears to me that *he did not, upon that principle, lower the duties of either class sufficiently*; and as the importation of any commodities, without an adequate duty, could soon be stopped by imposing a just

duty upon them, the risk is trifling, and the advantage would be on the side of extremely low duties in the first instance. I should say *one per cent.*"

And so with respect to duties which were for protection and not for revenue. To any duty upon foreign corn he was always firmly opposed. He was accustomed to say, "If I were compelled to choose, food is the last thing upon which I would attempt to place any protection." Whereas Mr. Huskisson, like Sir Robert Peel, advocated a sliding scale of duties through by far the greater portion of his career.\* Indeed, it was not until 1830, the year of his death, that that statesman distinctly expressed his opinion, that the corn laws were in themselves a burden and a restraint upon manufacturing and commercial industry, and that they ought to be abolished.

The supporters of unrestricted commerce from this time began visibly to gain ground; and a few years after a further sign of progress was apparent. An able writer upon this subject has stated, that Mr. Hume's letters in the *Morning Chronicle*, which, as we have already observed, were reprinted in the year 1824,

\* The object of the sliding scale was neither more nor less than to lay a heavy duty on grain when it was cheap, and a light duty when it was dear, in order that it might not prevent importation in periods of scarcity. Thus, whenever the price of wheat was above 73s. a quarter in this country, the duty on foreign wheat was only a shilling; but when it fell below 61s. a quarter, then the duty was to be 25s. 8d.; and was to increase a shilling with every shilling that the price decreased. The effect of this was, that unless there was a scarcity at home, foreign wheat could not be bought for less than 86s. a quarter, or 10s. 9d. a bushel.



powerfully contributed to the movement which commenced about that time. While, however, no man had greater confidence in sound principles—though he was for carrying the doctrines of free trade as far as any man—he always contended that the change from protection to the absence of restriction should be effected gradually, though simultaneously, so as to inflict the least possible injury to existing interests. Deeply convinced of the truth of the doctrines of free trade, his official experience had taught him that to an old commercial country like Great Britain, it would not be safe to apply these principles without the greatest caution; and while he never lost sight of them in the course which he recommended, he always earnestly protested against their unmitigated application.

The time, however, was at hand when the masses were to be appealed to, and throughout the land. On the evening of the defeat of Mr. Villiers' motion,\* "that evidence should be heard at the bar of the House on the subject of the Corn Laws, and their unfavourable effect upon the industry and prosperity of the country," there was present as a listener in the gallery, one who had come to town with a deputation for the purpose of aiding the cause of repeal, and whose spirit upon that occasion appears to have been stirred within him.† Immediately there arose from the seats of manufacturing industry, energetic and eloquent orators contending for immediate and complete emancipation. Mr. Cobden, who was soon after elected member for Stockport, and

\* 19th February, 1839.

† Mr. Cobden.

subsequently for the West Riding of Yorkshire, whose exertions Sir Robert Peel some years afterwards so pointedly acknowledged, was the most conspicuous as well as the most effective of the popular advocates. His energy was untiring, his style of oratory admirably suited to his subject, as well as to the larger portion of the assembly which he sought to influence. Some of his best efforts, which the writer happened to hear, reminded him of the effective use that may be made of a powerful hammer, when it is employed in perpetually hitting the same nail upon the head. Upon the subject of free trade in corn, as he has since remarked, "from the very earliest struggles of the League we were accustomed to quote Mr. Deacon Hume as one of the best authorities in favour of our views."

The measures relating to silk in 1824 and 1826, as well as to sugar, the earliest results brought about by the free trade doctrine, were much thought of at the time. But these were trifles when compared with the repeal of the duties upon foreign corn. This measure, for which the country in the year 1846 was scarcely prepared, was finally forced on, partly by the failure of the potato crop in Ireland, and partly by the conviction of Sir Robert Peel and his friends, that the foreign trade of this country had become necessary for the support of an increasing population, and that the only way in which it was possible to bring about an increase in foreign trade, was to admit the raw produce of foreigners, chiefly corn, in which alone they could pay for our manufactured goods. In what way the writings

and representations of the subject of these pages impressed these convictions upon influential minds has been made apparent from the debates in Parliament, in which he is so frequently cited as an authority. Sir Robert Peel, especially, as we have seen, was accustomed to quote him, and to render ample justice to his opinions, we will not say before he was himself convinced of their truth, but long before he could bring himself to propound, without reserve, the commercial principles which Mr. Deacon Hume for so many years energetically and unceasingly advocated.

It has been said, that when men of mark arise they have a mission to accomplish, and that they do not disappear until it is fulfilled. It seemed good to the All-wise Disposer of events, that as soon as Mr. Deacon Hume had, through the labours of nearly fifty years, largely contributed to prepare the way for commercial freedom, he should be withdrawn. No one had toiled so effectually for the removal of protective duties, as he of whom now it could only be said that his work was done. For several previous years he must have been confident that the triumph of the opinions which he had advocated, could not be far distant. In the abstract, the question had long been settled, and a very narrow induction was necessary by way of experimental confirmation, when the abstract conclusion was in accordance with the practical. He had witnessed withal, the gloomy winters of 1841 and 1842, winters, which the Prime Minister subsequently declared, could "never be effaced from his memory." It was impossible to hear, or to read

the speeches with which Sir Robert Peel introduced his measures and not perceive what he must do, and what he probably saw that he must do, if he remained in office, though he cared little for office. Abolitionists marked, when he introduced his bill for a relaxation of the tariff, his distinct avowal of the doctrine, in which all political economists are agreed, that we ought to buy in the cheapest market and sell in the dearest; which, as has been said, means neither more nor less, than that we ought to take the article which we have in the greatest abundance, and obtain from others that of which they have most to spare, thereby affording to mankind the means of enjoying the most complete supply of every earthly good, and in so doing carrying out, to the fullest extent, the Christian principle of doing to all men as we would they should do unto us.

It was curious, as was remarked at the time, "to see Sir Robert Peel, and many others equally well-read, alluding, as if it were some profound modern economical discovery, to a maxim so trite as to have existed at the time when Carthage flourished as a great commercial state."\* But from that hour, as the author just quoted remarks, "the minister's position was virtually changed."

\* By Mr. Doubleday, the well-known financial writer; who also records the anecdote of a Carthaginian cynic, who, determining to reprove his fellow citizens for their cupidity and prostration before the love of pelf, proclaimed, that if they would meet him, he would reveal to every man his secret thoughts. This proclamation having naturally drawn together a large crowd, the bitter old wag dismissed them with one sentence, "You are all thinking how to buy in the cheapest, and sell in the dearest market."

and he was henceforth understood by all the advocates of free trade to be a disciple. Nor was it to be wondered at. For though he spoke of corn and of sugar as exceptions to a general rule, and fortified himself respecting the latter with a quotation from Mr. Deacon Hume, he avoided stating the grounds of the exception, while he admitted the truth of the doctrine of the movement school. Month after month questions were put to him implying that from the principles he propounded, the abolitionists were confident that he was about to abolish the corn laws; and they repeated the question *whether* or not he intended to do so? It was a trying period for both sides of the House. They were obliged, however, to bide *his* time, and to be content with the answer which he invariably vouchsafed, namely, that he had no present intention of repealing those laws; but that he did "not regard the corn question as one upon which a minister, who was responsible for the welfare of the nation, ought to pledge himself once for all."

There can be no doubt that the conversion of Sir Robert Peel from protection to free-trade, if indeed he was not always a free-trader, was the result of a very firm conviction. But it was at any rate neither *so* sudden, nor so recent, as some persons still appear to suppose. He might latterly have been influenced by proceedings out of doors. The deficiency of the harvest, the failure of the potato crop in Ireland, had alarmed him. His own act of 1842 he never affected to regard as a settlement of the question. There was no course open to him but a reconsideration of the subject. *When,*

therefore, the sliding scale, so far from being a scale which was to provide for years of scarcity, as regularly and exactly as it was to provide for years of abundance, was, on the contrary, in the first year of difficulty, found, as Lord John Russell said, to be "a sliding scale which would not slide,"—the time for a final settlement had manifestly arrived.

There were, however, difficulties in the way which it required considerable decision and energy to surmount.

It is not altogether peculiar to this country that almost every subject, however remote in itself from party associations, sooner or later becomes identified with a political party. The absurdity of this fact is sometimes manifested in a remarkable manner. David Hume, as we have already mentioned, was the author of the doctrine of free-trade, and he was a Tory. Dr. Johnson, whose Toryism is equally well known, we are told by his biographer, upon hearing Sir Thomas Robinson talking of the evils of importation from Ireland, exclaimed, "Sir Thomas, you talk the language of a savage; what, sir, would you prevent any people from feeding themselves, if by any honest means they can do it?" Indeed, up to the period of the passing of the Reform Act, the principles of free-trade were never considered as the inheritance of any political party. Mr. Huskisson was a member of a Tory government. When he brought forward his measures many of those who sat upon his own side of the House were opposed to him: many who sat opposite to him assisted his

efforts. Sir Robert Peel and Lord John Russell were amongst his adherents; a fact which had not been prominently noticed until the latter, in reply to the cry which had been raised by the Conservatives against the Ministers in 1846, for not upholding protection, said, "You choose as your leader the present first Minister of the Crown, one who was in office with Mr. Huskisson, who was always a great promoter of Mr. Huskisson's measures, who acted, it is true, with reserve, but always advocated and promoted free-trade: and the right honourable baronet was known in principle to be opposed to the system of protection." Sir Robert Peel, too happy to confirm the statement, said, "As the noble lord has observed, I acted with Mr. Huskisson in 1822, 1825, and 1826 in revising the commercial system, and applying to that system the principle of free-trade. In the year 1842, after my accession to office, I proposed a revision of the Corn Laws. Why was the removal of the prohibition upon the importation of foreign meat and foreign cattle assented to? That removal was completely at variance with any assurance that the protection of agriculture which existed in the year 1840 and 1841 should be retained. Yet that removal was voted by very large majorities in Parliament. After the passing of the Corn Bill of 1842, I repeatedly declined to give any assurance that there should be no further change. These things are upon record. It was impossible for me, consistently with my convictions, to have said less." Nothing could have been more in accordance with the policy of Mr.

Huskisson. His principles found their practical issue in moderating duties, and introducing a tendency to free-trade as Parliament and the country were able to bear it. He dealt, in short, with the necessities of the times. Sir Robert Peel pursued a similar course with cautious, some will have it, with stealthy steps. But so little was this question a party matter, that even upon so comparatively recent an occasion as the reconstruction of the Tories under the new appellation of Conservatives, after the passing of the Act of 1831, by which the representation was so greatly changed, a restrictive policy was never insisted upon as a test; it was a question which had never entered within the domain of party.

The establishment, however, of the Anti-Corn-Law Association, first suggested at a dinner given to Dr. Bowring, at Manchester, in the year 1838, and which, soon after its formation, was translated into a "League," tended greatly to give the subject of free-trade, though most unnecessarily, a party complexion. The persons who composed it were chiefly radicals. The Whigs (and Mr. Deacon Hume had always been of their faith, though he went beyond them as to the extent to which he would apply his financial principles) were, for the most part, the advocates of a fixed duty. It was not surprising that almost simultaneously with Sir Robert Peel's abandonment of the sliding scale for free-trade, Lord John Russell should have abandoned the doctrine of a fixed duty, a fixed injustice as it was sometimes called, with the same result. But the former had by





far the greatest difficulty with which to contend. Knowing himself to be at the head of a powerful party, and a large majority of the House of Commons, who, moreover, generally felt strongly in favour of protective duties, he took the only honourable course which was open to him, he resigned. The Queen sent for Lord John Russell; but although he was aware that he should have the support of Sir Robert Peel in endeavouring to carry free-trade measures, he felt himself unequal to the task. Sir Robert Peel was speedily recalled. His position, since his resignation, having by that act become greatly altered, he ceased to be the leader of a political party. He had to choose, not as he had done so often out of "three," but between *two*, "courses." He found himself in a situation in which public duty pointed one way, and fidelity to party attachment another. Great as was the sacrifice he had to make, so far as his private feelings were concerned, painful as was the severance from political associates which it involved, he resolved to stand by his country. He had nothing in a political point of view to gain; on the contrary, he had much to lose, by the course which he followed.

What to most persons would have appeared the most useful and appropriate close to the public career of Mr. Deacon Hume, would have been, what he probably never seriously contemplated, but what was frequently demanded in some quarters,\* a seat in the House of

\* Especially in the "Westminster Review," at the general election in 1836 and afterwards.

Commons. No one during the years 1845 and 1846 could have spoken upon what had become the absorbing question of the day with so much information, or with greater authority; to say nothing of the intense satisfaction with which he would have seen the former leader of the Conservative party stand up in his place, and state as the first minister of the Crown, that in conformity with the recommendation contained in Her Majesty's Speech from the Throne, advised by her responsible servants, he was "about to proceed on the assumption adopted in the speech, that the repeal of prohibitory, and the relaxation of protective duties is in itself a wise principle—that protective duties, abstractedly, and on principle, were open to objection—that the policy of maintaining them might be defended, but that there must be shown to be special considerations, either of public policy or of justice, to vindicate the maintenance of them."\*

There were, and there are, those who, as Mr. Gladstone said not long after, "would, as it were, revenge upon commerce itself the wrong done to higher pursuits

\* The members of the Anti-Corn-Law League at once resolved that no efforts on their part should be wanting. They announced that a fund of a quarter of a million would be collected by them, if necessary, for the furtherance of their object, and at one meeting in Manchester 60,000*l.* were subscribed. Large sums continued to come in. A great Free Trade Bazaar was held in London for the sale of objects of art and manufacture contributed for the benefit of the cause. It was held in Covent Garden Theatre, which was made to resemble a vast Gothic hall, and was filled with an endless variety of the most magnificent objects of British ingenuity and skill. It was visited by upwards of one hundred thousand persons; and the amount received from the sale of the articles was more than 25,000*l.*

and ends by the money-worshipping spirit of the age." "Wealth," he truly added, "is the heaviest curse to those who idolize either it or the pleasures which it purchases; and the pursuit of it is often one of the subtlest snares by which the path of a human being is beset. But in this view, wealth, and commerce as the means of wealth, are like knowledge, or talent, or health, or any other earthly endowment. Yet each of them has its place in the natural—that is, in the providential—order of the world. Let us not exalt them above their own region, but neither let us deny their prerogatives within it. The diversity of the productions of different regions is the primeval law which sanctions their exchange.

"Nonne vides, cruceos ut Tmolus odores,  
India mittit ebur, molles sua thura Sabæi?" \*

Had Mr. Deacon Hume lived to see the session of the year 1846, he could scarcely have failed to have been gratified by the still more frequent allusions which were made to himself, as an authority of ultimate appeal upon this question. For while the Ministers and the abolitionists generally quoted largely his statistics, his opinions, and his arguments, not a few of the protectionists, Lord George Bentinck and Mr. Disraeli amongst the foremost, referred to the first mentioned almost as constantly, and with a respect which they did not extend to Mr. Macgregor.

Such feelings, however, as those to which we have alluded would have been transient compared with the delight with which Mr. Hume would have hailed the

\* Remarks upon "Recent Commercial Legislation." Murray, 1845.

advent of commercial deliverance, and observed the wisdom and moderation which characterised the speeches of the Prime Minister and the members of the Government generally in both Houses of Parliament. For there was a careful abstinence, so tempting at such a time, from exciting extravagant expectations. No delusions, borrowed from a powerful and popular association—out of doors, so far as the Government were concerned, were imported into the discussion, unless it were to mitigate their force or to expose their folly. The Minister forbore ascribing to the existing law, “famine, disease, and death.” He expressly stated his conviction that no very decided diminution in the price of wheat would follow upon the abolition of the duty. It is just to add that a large portion of the liberal party, including Lord Brougham and Mr. Roebuck, gave expression to similar sentiments. “I do not mean,” said the former, on the 25th of May, 1846, “that there will be no diminution of prices, though Lord Spencer held that opinion; my expectation is, that there will be a moderate reduction after the passing of this bill, from which bill I expect very great advantage to the country.”

When the question was asked, what benefit was to result, it was generally replied, the introduction of a sound principle, which, while it relieves Government from the responsibility of having to regulate, in periods of scarcity, the supply of food, insures, by natural laws, in ample amount, the cheapest and the best of every kind. That the effect would be, not so much to lower

the price of corn in this country, as to raise the price on the continent of Europe, thereby equalizing the demand here and abroad, and giving security to the people of England, even in years of deficiency, against any sudden or extravagant rise in price. That the abolition of protective duties would afford the people an opportunity of gradually improving their condition, of increasing the market for the productions of English manufacturing skill and industry; that by multiplying the sources of supply, the great national advantage of the change would insure greater steadiness of price; that while at present we were at the mercy of the vicissitudes of a single spot, the proposed law would enable us to go all over the globe for a supply; that if Europe should have a deficient harvest Providence might vouchsafe a bountiful one to America; that if the harvest of America should fail, Australia might be able to make up what was wanting; and that the moneys, and rate of fluctuation, would diminish as the field from which they derived a supply should be extended. Withal, that there would be certainty in the value of land, which would of itself compensate for many disadvantages; that, in addition to that certainty, the landowners would have peaceful enjoyment; instead of jealousy on the part of their poorer neighbours they would experience their good-will, without any abatement of hereditary respect.

It was said, and with equal truth, that nations advantageously trading with each other, are bound in heavy recognizances to keep the peace; that the current of

trade once suffered to run free, would deepen its channels and extend its ramifications; that its vivifying power would be felt by every member of the community; and that the surest foundations, humanly speaking, for the peace of the world, would be found to be commerce, extending its benefits to the great masses of the human race.

Such were the sentiments of the best informed of the abolitionists in Parliament upon this question, such was the tenor and substance of the discourse and conference of their adherents out of doors.

The history of what may be termed the restoration of free trade has yet to be written; and it will be more satisfactorily written ten years hence than now.\* The change, however, has for twelve years been tried, and the predictions of the most sanguine are being fulfilled. Trade is gradually extending itself, and the remaining impediments to the complete development of the principles of commercial freedom, will, in due season, undoubtedly be removed.

The Navigation Laws, dating from the Commonwealth, and "regarded by successive generations as monuments of human wisdom," experienced the fate of the Corn Laws more speedily than the most sanguine could possibly have expected. Since the first of January, 1850, our merchants have been enabled to "convey their property in the ships of any country to and from any part of the world, as well as to buy their

\* At the Free Trade Congress at Brussels, Mr. Chadwick did ample justice to the services of Mr. Deacon Hume.

ships wherever they are to be had best and cheapest." The result is found to be compatible with the prosperity of the mercantile navy, and to be productive of advantage to the commercial interests of the world;\* while the abolition of the laws which restricted the supply of human food has not only filled our markets and extinguished sedition, but, taking the average of years, has left farmers better off than ever.

Notwithstanding her recent retrograde movement there can be little doubt as to the course which France will ultimately follow. The French Minister of Agriculture and Commerce has put forth the following interesting questions to English agriculturists:—

1. Whether the breadth of land devoted to the growth of grain has been increased or diminished since the abolition of protecting duties? Should the arable acreage have diminished, whether the actual produce may not have been increased through the improvements in drainage and tillage?

\* "Amongst the results of this measure," Mr. Porter has observed, "not the least valuable is this, that it has served to convince foreign Governments that our previous commercial reforms were adopted by us in good faith, and in full confidence in their wisdom. The Dutch, against whose naval power our navigation law was originally and chiefly directed, hastened to place their system in agreement with our own, and other less formidable rivals have promptly followed their example. The Navigation Law of the United States was adopted simply as a measure of retaliation against this country, and has naturally and necessarily conformed itself to our change of system. Other States, which had not adopted our rule of restriction against foreign shipping, have been led by our recent legislation on the subject to forego the intention they had plainly intimated of following that rule, and thus, a most undoubted injury to our shipping interest has been averted."

2. What has been the effect of the repeal of the Corn Laws on English agriculture? Has the produce of the soil experienced an increase or diminution? Has the rent of land risen or fallen? Has the income of those who cultivate their own land improved or diminished? Has the selling price of land become better or worse?

3. What has been the influence of recent legislation on the consumption of bread and meat in England?

To these questions Mr. Hewitt Davis, a well-known agriculturist and land agent, has replied in the following words:—

1. There is no question that the breadth of land in cultivation has been increased since the abolition of protecting duties. In this period a great deal of common and waste land has been enclosed, and, as agriculture has improved, the larger returns from tillage and the growth of roots and artificial pastures alternately with corn, have led to the breaking up and conversion into arable of a large extent of the poorer pastures. At the same time, the average produce of arable land has been largely increased through the improvements in drainage and tillage. In 1857 larger crops of wheat were grown than were ever known; six quarters per acre were not uncommon, and as much as eight and even nine quarters were said to have been grown in parts of Kent, a return which is still thought fabulous over the greater part of England. By draining, clay soils have been made available for the growth of roots and winter cropping, and large returns of cattle-



food have been gained from land which formerly was kept in pasture, or, if in arable, lay fallow one year in four.

2. The effect of the repeal of the Corn Laws has been to enforce improvements on both landowners and tenants. Landlords have been anxious to enable their tenants to raise corn more cheaply, and have been improving their lands and buildings, and giving a freer use of their farms; and farmers have sought relief in higher cultivation, a better practice, and the introduction of improved implements and machinery; and there is no doubt that in this way the production of the soil has been largely increased, at the same time that cultivation has been carried on at less expense. In this period, in many instances, the farmers have been made to pay higher rents, and the income of those cultivating their own farms must have been benefited. In the last five years the sale price of land has considerably advanced, for not only has the rent of land increased, but also the number of years' purchase given for it.

3. The changes in this period have increased the labourers' consumption of bread and meat, for the additional employment found them on the land, and the general improvement of the country, have secured them more constant employment and higher wages."

To adopt the eloquent language of the biographer of the greatest of the name, "In no long time a hundred years will have elapsed from the day when David Hume told the world what the legislature of this country is now declaring, that national exclusiveness in trade was as foolish as it was wicked; that no nation could profit

by stopping the natural flood of commerce between itself and the rest of the world; that commercial restrictions deprive the nations of the earth of that free communication and exchange, which the author of the world has intended, by giving them soils, climates, and geniuses so different from each other, and that like the healthy circulation of the blood in living bodies, free-trade is the vital principle by which the nations of the earth are to become united in one harmonious whole.”\*

We must not close this chapter without remarking that though during the progress of the Corn Bill through Parliament, and for some years after, Mr. Macgregor continued Secretary at the Board of Trade, the success of the measure, and the active part which he bore in it, proved too much for the weaker part of his character. It is true Mr. Deacon Hume had regarded his appointment with satisfaction. He was better aware probably than any one else of his abilities, his vast information, his powers of application, and his zeal in the cause of commercial emancipation. He could not have failed to observe, that vanity was the sin which most easily beset him; though he could never have contemplated that it would rise to such a height, and conduct to such lamentable results, as was eventually the case. But as Burke severely, but justly says, “though in a small degree, and conversant in little things, vanity is of little moment, when full grown, it is the worst of vices, and the occasional mimic of them all. It makes the whole man false. It leaves nothing sincere or trustworthy

\* Burton's Life of David Hume, vol. ii.

about him. His best qualities are poisoned and perverted by it, and operate exactly as the worst." This passion, Mr. Macgregor latterly in no way endeavoured to control. It was consequently ever upon the increase, until at last it leavened thoroughly the whole man. Mr. Hume did not live long enough to see him two years in office, and his death in 1842 caused him, happily, to remain for ever ignorant of what would have deeply pained him.

The climax of Mr. Macgregor's self-esteem, we are told, "led him to resign his office of Secretary, with its salary of 1,500*l.* a year, from a delusive persuasion that he was about to become a member of Lord John Russell's new Cabinet." Having deliberately prepared the way he became a candidate for the city of Glasgow in July, 1847, opposing the old liberal members, Mr. Oswald and Mr. John Dennistoun. Unfortunately for himself, as the writer above quoted has remarked, he headed the poll.

"Upon the subject of the Royal British Bank, which he established, Mr. Macgregor would take no counsel, or if he promised to abide by any friendly advice, he was sure to relapse to his own opinion of his entire self-sufficiency. He was more a nominal than a real manager. He had resigned the chair three years previous to its recent bankruptcy, but the disclosures as to the mismanagement of the institution, and his own unsecured debt to the shareholders, overwhelmed a shattered body and a wounded spirit."

A curious note has been pointed out in the first volume of his "Note Book," published in 1835, detailing

the ruin of the old bank of Amsterdam, instituted in 1689, as a bank of deposit, "broken by an inconvenient mode of transferring sums from the account of one individual to another," and by the directors secretly lending and "locking up" 10,000,000 florins to the provinces of Holland and Friesland, "notwithstanding its original constitution bound the directors to have bullion in their coffers equal to the amount of its liabilities." This old story, it has been suggested, "might have saved Mr. Macgregor from much misconduct of the Royal British Bank. But theory and practice are different matters."\*

It is scarcely necessary to add, after what has been said, that Mr. Macgregor's character contrasted unfavourably in many important respects with that of his predecessor. He was succeeded in office by Mr. Porter, a man of inferior calibre to either, though a most useful and upright person, earnest in his convictions, as well as able and clear-headed in the transaction of public business. We have seen it stated that Mr. Porter, "by his skilful compilations, monopolized the fame, much of which belonged to Mr. Deacon Hume." The remark is undoubtedly correct; but it might have been said as justly of Mr. Macgregor as of his successor. Merit like that of Mr. Deacon Hume is not the less palpable because its complete recognition is the growth of time. On the contrary, that is the most enduring which is tardy in its development.

\* The *Times*. Mr. Macgregor died at Boulogne on the 23rd of April, 1857.

## CHAPTER XIII.

**MR. DEACON HUME'S PRODUCTIONS, ORAL AND WRITTEN—HIS INTELLECTUAL POWERS—INTERESTING TESTIMONIES—HIS LABOURS—INFLUENCE—PERSONAL CHARACTER—CONCLUDING REMARKS.**

“His conversation was pithy, and he wrote much in little room : but some of these labours of his never saw the light. Many persons that privately did converse with him, lighted their candles at his.”—CLARKE ON CARTER, 1662.

MR. DEACON HUME'S merits as a writer will perhaps be sufficiently apparent from what the reader has met with in this volume. He wrote more than his friends are aware of. He was an occasional contributor to some of the daily and weekly journals, as well as to a quarterly periodical. He wrote an article in the *Times* on the subject of the Prussian commercial system, in answer to one which was commonly attributed to Baron Brunow, the Prussian Minister at our court. His letters to friends, or public individuals who sought his opinion, sometimes amounted to short treatises. He was the author of a great variety of papers not intended for publication; many of which, doubtless, might be published, not only without inconvenience, but with advantage. Upon his retirement from office he put many of his manuscripts into the hands of a gentleman who begged the loan of them, believing that they might

aid him in the public service. Upon the decease of the individual referred to, who was not careful of papers, they could not be discovered.\* From his published writings, and his evidence before Parliamentary committees, the extent of Mr. Hume's ability and information upon subjects of finance, and the solidity of his judgment, may be correctly estimated.

"A short time before his death," writes Mr. Cobden, "I wrote to him and advised him to collect and reprint his writings and his evidence before Parliamentary Committees. In his reply, written by one of his daughters,† for he was then suffering from an affection of the arm, he seemed disposed to comply with my request; but death put an end to his valuable and honourable career."

The intellectual powers of Mr. Hume were considerable. His mind was remarkably perspicacious. It was also vigorous, original, creative. His language was distinguished by a condensation strikingly novel, while his illustrations were singularly felicitous and characteristic. To subjects which appeared to be commonplace he gave a charm, and brought new thoughts into regions which seemed to be exhausted. It is seldom that so much accuracy and pithiness of reasoning have

\* Six volumes of printed papers and pamphlets upon subjects connected with Political Economy, collected by this gentleman, came into the possession of the author of this biography soon after his death.

† The wife of the author, to whom he is largely indebted for information respecting the personal history of her father, that portion of it especially which is contained in the first and last chapters.

been combined with so much variety of expression. In the archives of the Board of Trade are to be found productions of his, out of which a course of practical political economy, applied to a boundless range of subjects, might be extracted. The limited scope of the present volume would not permit the author to avail himself of them. No writer, or speaker, probably ever conveyed his meaning in fewer words; while the lucidness of his conceptions gave transparency to all the topics which he handled. As has been said of Paley, "knowledge, however abstruse, by passing through his mind, became plain common sense, stamped with the characters which ensured its currency in the world."\* What is even more remarkable, without being a lawyer, he succeeded in the invention of a legal style, to which, since it is unequalled, the attention of future consolidators of the Statute Law ought to be directed.

The following passages from a communication from the Right Honourable Sir James Stephen, would have found a place in the second chapter of this volume, had the author been so fortunate as to have received it earlier. While it confirms all that has been advanced in that chapter, it goes beyond it in some very important respects.

"Mr. Deacon Hume and I were, during several years, contemporary members of the Board of Trade. But as Counsel to that Board I had nothing to do with his great work, the consolidation of the laws of the

\* Bishop Turton.

Customs. He wrote every word of the code, which ought to have borne his name, locked up day and night, as he often told me, in lodgings which he took for the purpose in Westminster, where even his wife and children were scarcely ever admitted.\* After a self-imprisonment of many months in that cell, he came out of it with a manuscript, which, when printed, filled a small octavo volume, and which might have been compressed into a pocket duodecimo. It contained all the kernel of that branch of the law which, till then, had been spread over the whole of the statutes at large, or printed collectively in the form of a quarto, containing as much letter-press as any two volumes of the Encyclopædia Britannica. Mr. Hume's digest was passed into a law by Parliament, as he told me, without the change of a word; and I do not believe that among all the Acts in the Statute Book any could be mentioned which so completely exhausted, and so luminously arranged so vast a subject within so very narrow a compass of words. It was then, and is still, my deliberate opinion that, in its original form, it was a masterpiece of legislative skill, and that, paradoxical as it may sound, his unacquaintance with the phraseology and the technicalities of the law was of the greatest possible use to him in accomplishing his work. Writing on a subject with which he was profoundly conversant, he succeeded in the invention of a legal style so concise, so clear, and so popular, that every one readily seized his meaning; nor can I remember a single appeal

\* His family were residing at St. Omer. See p. 21.



to the courts at Westminster to ascertain it, so long as he continued in office. It was through a vast labyrinth of details that Mr. Hume gradually worked his way to the most comprehensive principles; and he therefore held them with a firmness, and explained and acted upon them with a facility peculiar to himself. He and Mr. Huskisson were the earliest promulgators amongst us, for practical and definite purposes, of truths, by the rhetorical promulgation of which some of their disciples have earned so much celebrity."

His knowledge, though not abstruse, was extensive and accurate; and he was always eager to make further acquisitions. "He wasted very little of the portion of life conceded to him, and was constantly improving himself in the masculine pursuits of the philosophy of legislation, of political economy, of the constitutional history of the country, and of the history and changes of ancient and modern Europe." When his acquaintance with a subject became sufficient to justify the formation of a decided opinion, no man could more speedily arrive at a correct decision. 'Looking before and after,' he had an admirable judgment, with a thorough knowledge of the true principles of legislation and of trade, perfect integrity, singular disinterestedness, with a public spirit and a patriotism that entitled him to the approbation, not only of his own country, but of the civilized world.

In his own particular department his knowledge was so extensive and accurate, that he was referred to with confidence, and his views were generally adopted with-

out hesitation. "What struck me most," observes Mr. Ewart,\* "was his extreme acuteness and clearness. His mind was one in which were combined the rarely united qualities of large general views, and of minute yet lucid distinctions in detail—a union of the legal and philosophic mind." "I had not the privilege," says another competent judge,† "of an intimate acquaintance with Mr. Hume, only having had opportunities of seeing him occasionally when I visited London. As president of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, I went to town upon one occasion with a deputation, and we met Mr. Deacon Hume and Mr. Porter at Mr. Macgregor's. Many members of the House of Commons, and other advocates of free trade, came in during the evening, and there were animated discussions upon the question which had become one of great interest. Mr. Hume, my colleagues, and myself, withdrew to a corner of the room, and so absorbed were we with his interesting conversation, that we unconsciously sat there until two o'clock in the morning; all the company having retired except ourselves. Mr. Hume exhibited in his manners a charming simplicity of character, mingled with a quiet but unflinching maintenance of his opinions, which impressed me with the feeling that they were the result of deep inquiry and conviction. I doubt not that he effected more than most other men in influencing the minds of those statesmen with whom he came in contact, and not seldom by his quiet and playful exposure of monopolist fallacies."

\* M.P. for Dumfries. † J. B. Smith, Esq., M.P. for Stockport.

No one was more free from vanity. Regardless of observation, he pursued an unostentatious career. The public good was his peculiar care, and he laboured silently, for the most part, but unceasingly, after it. He was fond of saying that all class interests had abundance of people to protect them, but there was no one to protect the interest of the general public, of which, while he was at the Board of Trade, he considered himself to be the representative in his official capacity. When he was asked by a member of the Select Committee on Imports, who sought to perplex him in his evidence, "Upon what principle he would recommend a general change of the system in levying the import duties upon articles by the introduction of which at a less duty the manufactures of this country would be seriously affected," he boldly and characteristically replied, "Upon the principle of general national benefit. The question is, whether we mean to serve the nation, or whether we mean to serve particular individuals; I speak, whether from habit, from my own turn of mind, or from official circumstances, in behalf of the nation, or of the country at large."

As Controller of the Customs, before he was promoted to the last office which he held, he was the confidential adviser of the Board of Trade. His was the moving genius which, unseen, pointed out and directed the valuable improvements which have of late years been made in every part of our commercial system. Over each succeeding President of the Board of Trade the master-mind of Mr. Hume obtained a salutary influence:

and his great talents were devoted with the purest patriotism and the most unselfish views, to the promotion of the best interests of the country. In every step which has been taken for the last half century in the path of commercial emancipation—in every tendency towards a more enlightened policy his influence is to be traced; and had his powers of action equalled his perception of truth—could he, in other words, have given effect to his own convictions at an earlier period, far different, long since, would have been the state of our trading relations and the situation of our manufacturing industry. In short, as Sir James Graham has truly said, “the history of the Board of Trade, from the time of Mr. Huskisson to the close of Mr. Deacon Hume’s services at that Board, may be considered as the history of Mr. Deacon Hume himself; for he was the life and soul of that department; and every good measure which was adopted in rapid succession at that period, either received his earnest support, or may be traced to his wise suggestion.”

Another high authority\* has stated, and no one will attempt to controvert it, that a just record of the life and labours of the subject of this volume “will vindicate his better claim to a great share in the introduction of an improved system of finance, and to commercial intercourse upon true principles, than that of many others who are too generally thought to be exclusively entitled to public gratitude for the reformation. He was the patient and efficient investigator in the prelimi-

\* The Right Honourable Edward Ellice, M.P.

nary inquiries to the enactment of our free-trade code, and cleared the way for the success of those who followed him in completing the great work by legislation."

The following testimony, from the pen of Mr. Cobden, serves to show, in a very interesting manner, how thoroughly he appreciated Mr. Hume's services, and how entirely he agrees with the remark of Mr. Bright, expressed with reference to a Life of him, that "it would be neither right nor just, that his services should be forgotten."

"Mr. Deacon Hume had reached a venerable age before I entered the public arena, and when the full triumph of the principles for which he and I laboured was achieved, he had passed away. The only instances in which he appeared, to my knowledge, before Parliamentary committees, though I have no doubt his evidence was sought on other occasions, was on the state of the silk trade, and on the timber and the import duties. But he laboured in private circles to impress his views upon those who could influence the policy of the country; and he did so with such modesty, and so much disinterestedness, that the world will never know how much it is indebted to him for the progress of those sound principles which, though now so fashionable, were then so much discountenanced in all political combinations. I remember often quoting a dictum of his which gained much force from his authority—*that* 'a better case could be made out for giving a bounty on the importation than for levying a custom-house tax

on foreign corn.' Nobody, however, can appreciate the merit of his course who does not recollect how adverse he was at that time to the convictions and supposed interests of the governing classes of this country. He was far in advance of every class."

"I was connected with Mr. Deacon Hume," says a late Secretary to the Colonies,\* "for many years at the Board of Trade, and I shall always remember him with gratitude and affection; I believe that this country never possessed a more devoted and single-minded public servant, and that no man did more to promote the success of enlightened principles in our commercial legislation."

It would be easy to multiply testimonies, brief indeed, for the most part, but such as would equally redound to the honour of Mr. Hume, from Lord Overstone, Lord Monteagle, the Right Hon. Holt Mackenzie, Sir Benjamin Hawes, G. Paulett Scrope, Esq., and many more, but enough has been already adduced. It is saddening to reflect how many who would have been delighted to speak of him have either retired in a good old age from the labours of public life, or are already numbered with the dead; amongst these it may be sufficient to mention the late Lord Sydenham, and the present Earl of Ripon, than whom no persons more highly esteemed and respected him, or more constantly sought his counsel.

Mr. Hume's character was thoroughly English—a quality which commended it strongly to general esteem. His uniform good sense, a faculty which it has been con-

\* The Right Honourable H. Labouchere, M.P.

tended is less common than genius, which he also possessed, no one could fail to observe;—and it was in excellent keeping with the evenly-balanced theoretical and practical bearing of his mind. Perfectly aware that the surest approach to truth is by reason and argument, he was, nevertheless, prone “to catch the nearest way,” simply because it is the most direct, whether he was investigating some abstract questions of political economy, or of constitutional or international law. These were ‘the title deeds to public confidence’ produced by Mr. Hume, and recognised by those statesmen with whom he was daily brought into contact.

He was fond of labour. What Burke said of George Grenville was true of Deacon Hume: “with a masculine understanding, a resolute heart, and an application undissipated and unwearied, he took public business not only as a duty which he was to fulfil, but as a pleasure he was to enjoy; and he seemed to have little delight except in what in some way related to the public service.” He was at the Board of Trade daily before twelve, and he seldom left it until six o’clock. It was not much before that hour that Lord Sydenham, and the Earl of Ripon, successively Presidents of the Board of Trade, the latter especially, were accustomed to talk over financial matters before going to the House. There were other members of Parliament, also addicted to finance, who sought opportunities for similar conversations; and as Lord Panmure has correctly remarked, “many a feather was plucked from his plumage, and sported by others, without any acknowledgment of the

source from whence they were derived." These conferences were at length so protracted that he was obliged to intimate that they interfered with his punctually joining his family at dinner at seven o'clock. As he walked to, so he walked from, the Board of Trade to his residence in Russell Square, and Mrs. Hume was requested, on no account, to wait if he should fail to arrive at the expected time. He passed his evenings within his domestic circle, and if he was not fatigued, as was often the case latterly, he joined cheerfully in conversation, forgetful alike of the events, or of the labours of the day. Sometimes, and it was almost a habit, he would walk up and down the room for half an hour, with his hands lodged in the recesses of his pockets, talking as he walked, and pausing now and then, in order to express himself more deliberately. But when the hour of retiring arrived, and his family had one and all disappeared, unfortunately, as has been already mentioned, he was not accustomed to do likewise; for he indulged in the injurious practice of devoting an undue portion of the night to reading and writing, or to matters connected with official duties. And as he who would rise early must go to bed betimes, it will not be anticipated that he was, in the usual sense of the words, very frequently 'up with the lark.'

He was an instructive companion. No one upon leaving his company could with justice remark, as Dr. Johnson once did, "We have had some *talk*, but no *conversation*, there has been nothing discussed." His information was considerable, and he was as intent



upon augmenting his own store, as upon contributing to the public stock of it. His conversation was varied and animated, abounding with lively repartee, humour, and ready wit; oftentimes there was a sportiveness, almost akin to mischief, in his humour. In the difficult art of telling a story he particularly excelled. Avoiding the least approach to any premature merriment, every particular was related in terms the most concise and picturesque; and when he came to the *point*, there was invariably a twinkle in his eye, imparting an effect which no words could equal. For music he *had no taste*; he might be said to be almost insensible to its charms. He would occasionally, though rarely, lay aside the pursuit of the "Severer Science," and unbend his mind over a novel of Sir Walter Scott, whose productions, in common with mankind, he thoroughly appreciated; but he could never be tempted to waste his time upon the ephemeral productions, or *fashionable* fictions of the day; and he would often express his surprise that his colleagues, men of vigorous understanding, who were triflers in no respect, could not only read, but apparently devour, such productions, and recommend them to his notice. While we participate in the surprise of Mr. Hume, it is certain that there were no greater readers of this class of literature than Mr. Canning, Lord Melbourne, and some other eminent persons that might be mentioned. If Mr. Hume was found relaxing over what has been described as Mill, Macculloch, Senior, and Horner, dramatised—that is to say, one of Miss Martineau's tales illustrative of

political economy—he would smile and add, archly enough, “Yes; *I* read them for the *story*.” Though we believe he was never heard to say so, we doubt not he regretted that an authoress who had so remarkable a talent for rendering agreeable what is generally esteemed the unattractive, and in some of its parts not very feminine, subject of political economy, should have impaired her usefulness by a constant inculcation of the most democratic opinions; for in all but her anti-Malthusian doctrines she was a sort of female Godwin. Those, however, who regarded her productions in some respects with little favour, have generally been ready to admit the praiseworthy intention and benevolent spirit in which they were written, as well as the varied knowledge of nature and society, the acute discrimination of character, and remarkable power of entering into, and describing the feelings of the poorer classes, which many of her narratives evince. It was not, therefore, a matter of very great surprise that a Conservative Government should deem her literary exertions worthy of a public reward: and that during the year in which Mr. Deacon Hume received a pension, a small one should have been offered to her, which she declined to accept nevertheless, upon the plea, which was a pledge of her integrity, that she considered herself in the light of a political writer, and that the offer did “not proceed from the people, but from the Government, which did not represent the people.”

Mr. Deacon Hume was extensively consulted by persons who needed advice under difficult circum-

stances; and he was always ready to afford them the benefit of his counsel. If any married man repaired to him respecting pecuniary embarrassment, he would inquire whether his wife was aware of his position? If the reply was in the negative he would answer, "Then I must have nothing to say to you." We much doubt, however, whether he was one of those who would, under any circumstances have confessed with Sir Samuel Romilly, "there is nothing by which I have through life profited more than by the just observations, the good opinions, the sincere and gentle encouragement of amiable and sensible women:" for the temperament of the men was very different, and, with all his benevolence, it must be admitted that the "sterner stuff" was not altogether omitted in his composition.

Those who were connected with him by the ties of relationship, when in his presence, were not altogether free from, what for the want of a more appropriate word we must call, a feeling of fear. In arguing with the less informed too, he was sometimes impatient of contradiction; and for incapacity he was not perhaps accustomed to make the largest allowance. With honest prejudice he could patiently do battle; 'smile when opposed and be gentle after triumph.'

"It would in many respects have been advantageous to me," writes one who was a well-known member of Parliament, "if my public engagements had not with other hindrances precluded more frequent communication with one whose intellectual qualities and experience were so well calculated to inform and interest. In

addition to interviews, too few I regret to say, at his own house, we had occasionally short but agreeable conversations when we met on the Queen's highway, in the course of rides mutually undertaken for the good of our personal constitutions, while thinking upon the larger subject of the constitution of Great Britain. Having been placed in circumstances as early as Mr. Robinson's Corn Bill of 1817 to write upon the subject, I took up the principle of protective duties not taxation for revenue, and the distinction formed matter of conversation with my friend, in which he condescended to deal kindly with my prejudices."

Mr. Hume was endowed with the faculty of method in an uncommon degree, and his administrative powers were very considerable. Precise in dealing with the every-day affairs of life, he did not disdain to insist upon the every-day maxim, "there is a right way of doing everything."

"I had the pleasure of knowing him," writes another who survives, "for nearly fifty years, and during most of that period rather intimately. All who knew Mr. Hume esteemed and loved him. He was at least half a century ahead of his time."

His generosity was susceptible, and it was delicate. Those who knew him were almost afraid to appeal to his benevolence, it was, in proportion to his means, so uncalculating and liberal. The writer has heard an instance related upon the best authority, in which death having suddenly deprived a wife and family not only of its head, but of the means of subsistence,

Mr. Hume and his family proved benefactors indeed. The widow has been heard to relate how, when in the earliest days of her sorrow, and feeling that she had no sort of claim upon Mr. Hume, she set out one morning from the neighbourhood of St. Paul's for Russell Square, and at last summoned up courage to lift the knocker of the door. She would dwell upon the kind manner in which he received her, and how immediately all fear of giving offence was dismissed—how he expressed his deep regret for the loss she had sustained, and the respect he had always entertained for the deceased, who was in business in the city—how he gave her a handsome donation, promising to repeat it, and also to do what he could for her and hers. Never was a promise more completely fulfilled. The family were for years assisted by Mr. and Mrs. Hume, and some of their daughters, in every possible way; and in due time they had the satisfaction of seeing one or more of them occupying good situations, and a son become eminent in one of the highest departments of art.

To pecuniary applications in the way of loan he did not often accede, mindful of the old proverb, perhaps, or for reasons of his own. But he never made them excuses for refusing assistance in a time of need. "I do not *lend*," he would say; "but I will *give* you—with pleasure." And the sum would often prove a quarter, perhaps half, of the amount which had been requested. It will not be supposed that he was ever heedless or indiscriminate in his bounty. Nor will it be necessary

to add that he was fully alive to all the evils of mendicity as a trade. He was less frequently imposed upon than the generality of mankind. It was always the merits, never the apparent magnitude or specious aspect of a case, that prevailed with him. For instance, when his daily walks commenced to the Board of Trade, and he passed the crossing a little below Northumberland House, he was, of course, accosted, in common with all other foot passengers, by the assiduous "sweeper," and his outstretched hat. Mr. Hume perceiving at once the obvious industry, as well as the utility of the occupation, one morning took the man aside, bade him make no more applications to him, telling him at the same time that as he passed daily he would give him sixpence every week; and the pension was continued during the entire period of his connection with the Board of Trade. Upon his retirement, it appears he omitted to give his diligent friend any intimation that his walks in that direction were drawing to a close; and for a long time the old man was at a loss to guess what had become of him. After this period Mr. Hume very rarely passed by that way on foot. Once, however, he happened to do so, and was immediately recognised by his old friend, whom he once more relieved; and was infinitely diverted as he walked away, to hear the strange exclamations of surprise and gratitude which broke from the lips of the old man.

There were cases, however, and cases which are too often relieved by the benevolent, to which, being

satisfied of their frequently fabulous character and evil tendency, he uniformly turned a deaf ear. Amongst these may be mentioned a touching petition respecting a deceased cow or a dead donkey.

His friendships were sincere, and they were firm. To a friend who had written to him upon quitting office, he replies, "I am much gratified by your letter, knowing well how much intimacies, and even friendships, are the creatures of circumstances—that they generally arise out of accidental facilities, and mostly decline after that sustenance is withdrawn, I had felt much regret at the separation which your relinquishment of office would necessarily occasion between us."

The mental quality which at school disposed him to protect the weak against the strong, and to exert himself against the oppressor, continued with him through life. It was respecting a case of this nature which came under his notice, that he said, "If it were a question devoid of pecuniary consequences, I could hardly suppress my indignation sufficiently to let such a gross falsification pass for currency; but to suffer the wolf at the spring to triumph in the argument over the lamb, when the lamb is, in consequence, to be *devoured*, is more than mortal heart can bear." It will be readily believed that though he was less known to the world in general than most of those who have reached the eminence to which he attained, but of which he never appeared to be conscious, he was an object of the sincerest respect and regard with all who enjoyed the privilege of an intimate acquaintance with him.

He had an aversion to sitting for his likeness; no portrait of him consequently exists. In person he was of about the middle stature; his features were strongly marked; his forehead high and intellectual; his eye singularly expressive; it might be said to be a light hazel, but the colour it was not easy to define, so constantly did it vary with each particular expression. His voice was pleasing, of small compass indeed, but well suited to conversation, in which he largely indulged; there was a keen sense of the ludicrous, and he had a merry laugh. His gait was uncommon: it was rapid and firm, indicative at once of decision and precision. He was slightly, though very slightly, old fashioned in his attire, which increased rather than lessened his gentlemanly appearance. Like his schoolfellow, the late Sir Francis Burdett, he continued to wear top-boots until they became singular. There was, in short, an individuality about him which no one could fail to observe. Even his knock at the door was like that of no other person; it was instantly recognised by his family or friends. No one could converse with him, even for a few minutes, and not perceive that he was an extraordinary man. Whether he was engaged in public matters, or in the ordinary affairs of his own establishment, whether he was at home or abroad, everything which he did bore the stamp of his character, which displayed energy, distinctness of purpose, 'strenuousness without bustle,' unwearied application, and devotion to public interests.

---



It has ever been deemed a worthy undertaking to draw latent merit from obscurity, and to place the long withheld meed of distinction upon the time-worn brow. The present attempt, however, is scarcely of this kind. The subject of this memoir was never obscure; he has been for some years removed from the world, and his merits were acknowledged by the leading statesmen of his day, who alone had opportunities, if such were fully granted to any, of duly estimating his services. The object of the foregoing sketch has been, to a considerable degree, to supply, not to those only who are engaged in the labours of official life, but for the benefit and information of the general public, with whom his mind so feelingly sympathised, and his heart so strongly beat in unison, a detailed account of the chief events of a life, which was lavishly spent in its service, and whose energies were never more powerfully or more industrially exerted than when they were most hidden from the public view. The author more than doubts whether Mr. Deacon Hume ever silently applied to himself, much less gave expression to sentiments at all similar to those which were uttered by one whose labours in the cause of commercial freedom, though late, were most effectual; "It may be I shall leave a name sometimes remembered with expressions of good will in the abodes of those whose lot it is to labour and to earn their daily bread by the sweat of their brow, when they shall recruit their exhausted strength with abundant and untaxed

food, the sweeter because it is no longer leavened by a sense of injustice.”\*

All that the preceding passage can convey is applicable, however, to both instances; and the just expectations which were awakened in the breast of “the greatest member of Parliament that ever existed,” might, with equal propriety, have found a place in the mind of the less conspicuous, but more consistent, the, at least, equally laborious, and not less patriotic, individual, whose important services to his country are recorded in this volume. If the author has at all succeeded in asserting the claims of Mr. Deacon Hume to public gratitude, claims which, from the unhappy system that prevails with regard to the real workmen in our Government establishments, have been hitherto imperfectly recognised, and which, but for such a record, would soon be unknown to one person in a thousand, he will never regret that, while passing subjects of abiding interest in review, diligently, faithfully, conscientiously, he attempted to raise a slight memorial to his fame. The memories of such men should be dear to the people of this country, who, when once they are made aware of the debt they owe, are rarely slow to do justice, or to evince their gratitude.

\* Sir Robert Peel’s speech on quitting office, June 29, 1846.

LONDON:  
PRINTED BY SMITH, ELDER AND Co.,  
LITTLE GREEN ARBOUR COURT, E.C.

65, Cornhill, London, November, 1858.

## NEW AND STANDARD WORKS

PUBLISHED BY

SMITH, ELDER & Co.

### WORKS IN THE PRESS.

*Social Innovators and their Schemes.* By  
WILLIAM LUCAS SARGANT, Author of "The Science of  
Social Opulence," &c.

Post 8vo. (Now Ready.)

*New Zealand and its Colonization.* By WILLIAM  
SWAINSON, Esq.

Demy 8vo.

*Hong Kong to Manilla.* By H. F. ELLIS, R.N.  
8vo, with Illustrations. (Nearly ready.)

*The Endowed Schools of Ireland.* By HARRIET  
MARTINEAU. 8vo. (Now ready.)

*The Food Grains of India.* By Dr. J. FORBES WATSON.  
8vo. (Nearly Ready.)

*Christianity in India.* By JOHN WILLIAM KAYE,  
Author of "Life of Lord Metcalfe," &c.  
8vo. (Nearly ready.)

*Indian Scenes and Characters, Sketched  
from Life.* By Prince ALEXIS SOLTYKOFF.

Sixteen Plates in Tinted Lithography, with Descriptions. Colombier Folio.  
(Nearly Ready.)

*The Life of J. Deacon Hume, Esq., late  
Secretary to the Board of Trade.* By the Rev. CHARLES  
BADHAM. Post 8vo. (Just Ready.)

*The Parents' Cabinet of Amusement and  
Instruction, for Young Persons.*

A New and Revised Edition.

In Shilling Volumes, Post 8vo, with a Frontispiece printed in Oil Colours, and  
numerous Woodcuts, in a handsome Illustrated Binding.

VOLUME I. WILL BE PUBLISHED ON THE 1ST OF DECEMBER.

## NEW PUBLICATIONS.

*Lectures and Addresses on Literary and Social Topics.* By the late Rev. FRED. W. ROBERTSON, of Brighton. Post 8vo, price 7s. 6d. cloth.

*Phantastes: a Faerie Romance for Men and Women.* By GEORGE MACDONALD, Author of "Within and Without." Post 8vo, price 10s. 6d. cloth.

*Historic Notes on the Old and New Testament.* By SAMUEL SHARPE, Esq. New and Revised Edition. Post 8vo, 7s. cloth.

*The Life of Charlotte Brontë.* (CURRER BELL.) Author of "JANE EYRE," "SHIRLEY," "VILLETTE," &c. By MRS. GASKELL, Author of "North and South," &c. Fourth Edition, Revised, One Volume, with a Portrait of Miss Brontë and a View of Haworth Parsonage. Price 7s. 6d.

"All the secrets of the literary workmanship of the authoress of 'Jane Eyre' are unfolded in the course of this extraordinary narrative."—*Times*.

"Mrs. Gaskell has produced one of the best biographies of a woman by a woman which we can recall to mind."—*Athenæum*.

*Gunnery in 1858: being a Treatise on Rifles, Cannon, and Sporting Arms.* By WILLIAM GREENER, Author of "The Gun."

Demy 8vo, with Illustrations, price 14s., cloth.

"Mr. Greener's Treatise is suggestive, ample, and elaborate."—*Athenæum*.

"An acceptable contribution to professional literature, written in a popular style."—*United Service Magazine*.

"A comprehensive work, abounding in information, and full of suggestions well worthy of attention."—*Spectator*.

"A work of great practical value, which bids fair to stand the chief practical authority on the subject."—*Military Spectator*.

"The most interesting work of the kind that has come under our notice."—*Saturday Review*.

"A very comprehensive work."—*Naval and Military Gazette*.

*Tents and Tent Life.* By Capt. GODFREY RHODES, 94th Regt. Post 8vo, with Twenty-eight Plates, 12s. cloth.

*The Education of the Human Race.* Now first Translated from the German of LESSING.

Fcap. 8vo, antique cloth, price 4s.

\*\*\* This remarkable work is now first published in English.

"An agreeable and flowing translation of one of Lessing's finest Essays."—*National Review*.

The Essay makes quite a gem in its English form."—*Westminster Review*.

"This invaluable Tract."—*Critic*.

*Homely Ballads for the Working Man's Fireside.* By MARY SEWELL.

Post 8vo, cloth, One Shilling.

"Very good verses conveying very useful lessons."—*Literary Gazette*.

NEW PUBLICATIONS—*continued.*

*Sermons.* By the late REV. FRED. W. ROBERTSON, A.M.,  
Incumbent of Trinity Chapel, Brighton.

FIRST SERIES—*Fifth Edition, Post 8vo, price 9s. cloth.*

SECOND SERIES—*Fifth Edition, price 9s. cloth.*

THIRD SERIES—*Third Edition, Post 8vo, with Portrait, price 9s. cloth.*

"Very beautiful in feeling and occasionally striking and forcible in conception to a remarkable degree."—*Guardian.*

"Mr. Robertson, of Brighton, is a name familiar to most of us, and honoured by all to whom it is familiar."—*Globe.*

"These sermons are full of thought and beauty. There is not a sermon in the series that does not furnish evidence of originality without extravagance, of discrimination without tediousness, and of piety without cant or conventionalism."—*British Quarterly.*

*Esmond.* By W. M. THACKERAY, ESQ.

*A New Edition in One Volume, Crown 8vo, price 6s. cloth.*

"Mr. Thackeray has selected for his hero a very noble type of the cavalier softening into the man of the eighteenth century, and for his heroine one of the sweetest women that ever breathed from canvas or from book since *Rafaelle* painted and *Shakspeare* wrote."—*Spectator.*

"Apart from its special merits "*Esmond*"

must be read just now as an introduction to "*The Virginians.*" It is quite impossible fully to understand and enjoy the latter story without a knowledge of "*Esmond.*" The new tale is in the strictest sense the sequel of the old, not only introducing the same characters, but continuing their history at a later period."—*Leader.*

*Captivity of Russian Princesses in the Caucasus: including a Seven Months' Residence in Shamil's Seraglio, in the Years 1854-5.* Translated from the Russian, by H. S. EDWARDS.

*With an authentic Portrait of Shamil, a Plan of his House, and a Map.*

*Post 8vo, price 10s. 6d. cloth.*

"A book than which there are few novels more interesting. It is a romance of the Caucasus. The account of life in the house of Shamil is full and very entertaining; and of Shamil himself we see much."—*Examiner.*

"The story is certainly one of the most curious we have read; it contains the best popular notice of the social polity of Shamil and the manners of his people."—*Leader.*

"The narrative is well worth reading."—*Athenæum.*

*Religion in Common Life.* By WILLIAM ELLIS.

*Post 8vo, price 7s. 6d. cloth.*

"A book addressed to young people of the upper ten thousand upon social duties."—*Examiner.*

"Lessons in Political Economy for young people by a skillful hand."—*Economist.*

*The Sea Officer's Manual; being a Compendium of the Duties of a Commander; First, Second, Third, and Fourth Officer; Officer of the Watch; and Midshipman in the Mercantile Navy.* By CAPTAIN A. PARISH, of the East India Merchant Service.

*Second Edition, Small Post 8vo, price 5s. cloth.*

"A very lucid and compendious manual. We would recommend youths intent upon a seafaring life to study it."—*Athenæum.*

"A little book that ought to be in great request among young seamen."—*Examiner.*

## NEW WORKS ON INDIA AND THE EAST.

*Personal Adventures during the Indian Rebellion, in Rohilcund, Futteghur, and Oude.* By W. EDWARDS, Esq., B. C. S.

*Third Edition. Post 8vo, price 6s. cloth.*

"For touching incidents, hair-breadth escapes, and the pathos of sufferings almost incredible, there has appeared nothing like this little book of 'Personal Adventures.'"—*Athenæum*.

"Among the stories of hair-breadth escapes in India this is one of the most interesting and touching."—*Examiner*.

"A very touching narrative."—*Lit. Gazette*.  
"No account of it can do it justice."—*Globe*.

*The Chaplain's Narrative of the Siege of Delhi.* By the Rev. J. E. W. ROTTON, Chaplain to the Delhi Field Force.

*Post 8vo, with a Plan of the City and Siege Works, price 10s. 6d. cloth.*

"A simple and touching statement, which bears the impress of truth in every word."—*Athenæum*.

"An earnest record by a Christian minister of some of the most touching scenes which can come under observation."—*Literary Gazette*.

*The Crisis in the Punjab.* By FREDERICK H. COOPER, Esq., C.S., Umritsir.

*Post 8vo, with Map, price 7s. 6d. cloth.*

"The book is full of terrible interest. The narrative is written with vigour and earnestness, and is full of the most tragic interest."—*Economist*.

"One of the most interesting and spirited books which have sprung out of the sepoj mutiny."—*Globe*.

*Eight Months' Campaign against the Bengal Sepoys, during the Mutiny, 1857.* By Colonel GEORGE BOURCHIER, C.B., Bengal Horse Artillery.

*With Plans. Post 8vo, price 7s. 6d. cloth.*

"A right manly, fair, and forcible statement of events."—*Athenæum*.

"Colonel Bouchier relates his adventures in a free and graceful manner."—*Literary Gazette*.

*Narrative of the Mission from the Governor-General of India to the Court of Ava in 1855.* With Notices of the Country, Government, and People. By CAPTAIN HENRY YULE, Bengal Engineers.

*Imperial 8vo., with 24 Plates (12 coloured), 50 Woodcuts, and 4 Maps. Elegantly bound in cloth, with gilt edges, price 2l. 12s. 6d.*

"A stately volume in gorgeous golden covers. Such a book is in our times a rarity. Large, massive, and beautiful in itself, it is illustrated by a sprinkling of elegant wood-cuts, and by a series of admirable tinted lithographs."

"We have read it with curiosity and gratification, as a fresh, full, and luminous report upon the condition of one of the most interesting divisions of Asia beyond the Ganges."—*Athenæum*.

*The Autobiography of Lutfullah, a Mohamadan Gentleman, with an Account of his Visit to England.* Edited by E. B. EASTWICK, Esq.

*Third Edition, Small Post 8vo. Price 5s. cloth.*

"We have read this book with wonder and delight."—*Athenæum*.

"It bears the strongest resemblance to *Gulistan* of anything we have ever read."—*Spectator*.

## NEW WORKS ON INDIA AND THE EAST.

*Continued.**The Parsees: their History, Religion, Manners, and Customs.* By DOSABHOY FRAMJEE.

Post 8vo, price 10s. cloth.

"An acceptable addition to our literature. It has carefully gathered together, and formed into a shapely whole."—*Economist*.

*Life and Correspondence of Lord Metcalfe.*

By JOHN WILLIAM KAYE.

New and Cheap Edition, in 2 Vols., Small Post 8vo, with Portrait, price 12s. cloth

"One of the most valuable biographies of the present day."—*Economist*. | "An edition revised with care and judgment."—*Globe*.

*The Life and Correspondence of Sir John Malcolm, G.C.B.* By JOHN WILLIAM KAYE.

Two Volumes, 8vo. With Portrait. Price 36s. cloth.

"This book deserves to participate in the popularity which it was the good fortune of Sir John Malcolm to enjoy."—*Edinburgh Review*. | "Mr. Kaye has used his materials well, and has written an interesting narrative, copiously illustrated with valuable documents."—*Examiner*.

*Suggestions Towards the Future Government of India.* By HARRIET MARTINEAU.

Second Edition. Demy 8vo, price 5s. cloth.

*British Rule in India.* By HARRIET MARTINEAU.

Fifth Thousand. Price 2s. 6d. cloth.

*The Defence of Lucknow: A STAFF-OFFICER'S DIARY.*

By Capt. THOS. F. WILSON, 13th Bengal N. I., Assistant-Adjutant-General.

Sixth Thousand. With Plan of the Residency. Small post 8vo., price 2s. 6d.

*Tiger Shooting in India.*

By LIEUTENANT WILLIAM RICE, 25th Bombay N. I.

Super Royal 8vo. With Twelve Plates in Chroma-lithography. 21s. cloth.

*The Commerce of India with Europe, and its**Political Effects.* By B. A. IRVING, Esq. Post 8vo, price 7s. 6d. cloth.*Views and Opinions of Brigadier-General*

Jacob, C.B. Edited by Captain LEWIS PELLY.

Demy 8vo, price 12s. cloth.



## MR. RUSKIN'S WORKS ON ART.

*The Elements of Drawing.*

*Second Edition. Crown 8vo. With Illustrations drawn by the Author. Price 7s. 6d., cloth.*

"The rules are clearly and fully laid down; and the earlier exercises always conducive to the end by simple and unembarrassing means. The whole volume is full of liveliness."—*Spectator*.

"We close this book with a feeling that, though nothing supercedes a master, yet that no student of art should launch forth without this work as a compass."—*Athenæum*.

"It will be found not only an invaluable acquisition to the student, but agreeable and

instructive reading for any one who wishes to refine his perceptions of natural scenery, and of its worthiest artistic representations."—*Economist*.

"Original as this treatise is, it cannot fail to be at once instructive and suggestive."—*Literary Gazette*.

"The most useful and practical book on the subject which has ever come under our notice."—*Press*.

*Modern Painters, Vol. IV. On Mountain Beauty.*

*Imperial 8vo, with Thirty-five Illustrations engraved on Steel, and 116 Woodcuts, drawn by the Author. Price 2l. 10s. cloth.*

"Considered as an illustrated volume, this is the most remarkable which Mr. Ruskin has yet issued. The plates and woodcuts are profuse, and include numerous drawings of mountain form by the author, which prove Mr. Ruskin to be essentially an artist. He is an unique man, both among artists and writers."—*Spectator*.

"The present volume of Mr. Ruskin's elaborate work treats chiefly of mountain scenery, and discusses at length the principles involved in the pleasure we derive from mountains and their pictorial representation. The singular beauty of his style, the hearty sympathy with all forms of natural loveliness, the profusion of his illustrations form irresistible attractions."—*Daily News*.

*Modern Painters, Vol. III. Of Many Things.*

*With Eighteen Illustrations drawn by the Author, and engraved on Steel. Price 38s. cloth.*

"Every one who cares about nature, or poetry, or the story of human development—every one who has a tinge of literature or philosophy, will find something that is for him in this volume."—*Westminster Review*.

"Mr. Ruskin is in possession of a clear and penetrating mind; he is undeniably practical in his fundamental ideas; full of the deepest reverence for all that appears to him beautiful and holy. His style is, as usual, clear, bold,

racy. Mr. Ruskin is one of the first writers of the day."—*Economist*.

"The present volume, viewed as a literary achievement, is the highest and most striking evidence of the author's abilities that has yet been published."—*Leader*.

"All, it is to be hoped, will read the book for themselves. They will find it well worth a careful perusal."—*Saturday Review*.

*The Stones of Venice.*

*Complete in Three Volumes, Imperial 8vo, with Fifty-three Plates and numerous Woodcuts, drawn by the Author. Price 5l. 15s. 6d., cloth.*

EACH VOLUME MAY BE HAD SEPARATELY.

VOL. I. THE FOUNDATIONS, with 21 Plates, price 2l. 2s. 2nd Ed.

VOL. II. THE SEA STORIES, with 20 Plates, price 2l. 2s.

VOL. III. THE FALL, with 12 Plates, price 1l. 11s. 6d.

"This book is one which, perhaps, no other man could have written, and one for which the world ought to be and will be thankful. It is in the highest degree eloquent, acute, stimulating to thought, and fertile in suggestion. It will, we are convinced, elevate taste and intellect, raise the tone of moral feeling, kindle benevolence towards men, and increase the love and fear of God."—*Times*.

"The 'Stones of Venice' is the production

of an earnest, religious, progressive, and informed mind. The author of this essay on architecture has condensed into it a poetic apprehension, the fruit of awe of God, and delight in nature; a knowledge, love, and just estimate of art; a holding fast to fact and repudiation of hearsay; an historic breadth, and a fearless challenge of existing social problems, whose union we know not where to find paralleled."—*Spectator*.

WORKS OF MR. RUSKIN—*continued.**Modern Painters. Vols. I. and II.**Imp. 8vo. Vol. I., 5th Edit., 18s. cloth. Vol. II., 4th Edit., 10s. 6d. cloth.*

"Mr. Ruskin's work will send the painter more than ever to the study of nature; will train men who have always been delighted spectators of nature, to be also attentive observers. Our critics will learn to admire, and mere admirers will learn how to criticise: thus a public will be educated."—*Blackwood's Magazine.*

"A generous and impassioned review of the works of living painters. A hearty and earnest work, full of deep thought, and developing great and striking truths in art."—*British Quarterly Review.*

"A very extraordinary and delightful book, full of truth and goodness, of power and beauty."—*North British Review.*

*The Seven Lamps of Architecture.**Second Edition, with Fourteen Plates drawn by the Author. Imperial 8vo. Price 11. 1s. cloth.*

"By the 'Seven Lamps of Architecture,' we understand Mr. Ruskin to mean the seven fundamental and cardinal laws, the observance of and obedience to which are indispensable to the architect, who would deserve the name. The politician, the moralist, the divine, will find in it ample store of instructive matter, as well as the artist. The author of this work belongs to a class of thinkers of whom we have too few amongst us."—*Examiner.*

"Mr. Ruskin's book bears so unmistakably the marks of keen and accurate observation, of a true and subtle judgment and refined sense of beauty, joined with so much earnestness, so noble a sense of the purposes and business of art, and such a command of rich and glowing language, that it cannot but tell powerfully in producing a more religious view of the uses of architecture, and a deeper insight into its artistic principles."—*Guardian.*

*Lectures on Architecture and Painting.**With Fourteen Cuts, drawn by the Author. Second Edition. Crown 8vo. Price 8s. 6d. cloth.*

"Mr. Ruskin's lectures—eloquent, graphic, and impassioned—exposing and ridiculing some of the vices of our present system of building, and exciting his hearers by strong motives of duty and pleasure to attend to architecture—are very successful."—*Economist.*

"We conceive it to be impossible that any intelligent persons could listen to the lectures, however they might differ from the judgments asserted, and from the general propositions laid down, without an elevating influence and an aroused enthusiasm."—*Spectator.*

*The Political Economy of Art. Price 2s. 6d. cloth.*

"A most able, eloquent, and well-timed work. We hail it with satisfaction, thinking it calculated to do much practical good, and we cordially recommend it to our readers."—*Witness.*

"Mr. Ruskin's chief purpose is to treat the artist's power, and the art itself, as items of the world's wealth, and to show how these may be best evolved, produced, accumulated, and distributed."—*Athenæum.*

"We never quit Mr. Ruskin without being the better for what he has told us, and we therefore recommend this little volume, like all his other works, to the perusal of our readers."—*Economist.*

"This book, daring, as it is, glances keenly at principles, of which some are among the articles of ancient codes, while others are evolving slowly to the light."—*Leader.*

*Notes on the Pictures in the Exhibition of the Royal Academy, &c., for 1858. By JOHN RUSKIN. Fifth Thousand. 8vo, price One Shilling.**A Portrait of John Ruskin, Esq., Engraved by F. HOLL, from a Drawing by GEORGE RICHMOND. Prints, One Guinea; India Proofs, Two Guineas.*

## RECENT WORKS.

*Annals of British Legislation, a Classified Summary of Parliamentary Papers.* Edited by PROFESSOR LEONE LEVI.

THE TWENTY-SEVENTH PART IS JUST ISSUED.

*Antiquities of Kertch, and Researches in the Cimmerian Bosphorus.* By DUNCAN MCPHERSON, M.D., Imperial Quarto, with Fourteen Plates and numerous Illustrations, including Eight Coloured Fac-Similes of Relics of Antique Art, price Two Guineas.

*The Principles of Agriculture; especially Tropical.* By P. LOVELL PHILLIPS, M.D.  
Demy 8vo, price 7s. 6d. cloth.

*Westgarth's Victoria, and the Australian Gold Mines in 1857.*

Post 8vo, with Maps, price 10s. 6d., cloth.

*Tauler's Life and Sermons.*

Translated by MISS SUSANNA WINKWORTH. With a Preface by the REV. CHARLES KINGSLEY.

Small 4to, Printed on Tinted Paper, and bound in antique style, with red edges, suitable for a Present. Price 15s.

*Chandless' Visit to Salt Lake; being a Journey Across the Plains to the Mormon Settlements at Utah.*

Post 8vo, with a Map, price 9s. cloth.

*Doubleday's Life of Sir Robert Peel.*

Two Volumes, 8vo, price 18s. cloth.

*Cayley's European Revolutions of 1848.*

Crown 8vo, price 6s. cloth.

*Bunsen's (Chevalier) Signs of the Times; or, The Dangers to Religious Liberty in the Present Day.*

Translated by MISS SUSANNA WINKWORTH.

One Volume, 8vo, price 16s. cloth.

*Payn's Stories and Sketches.*

Post 8vo, price 3s. 6d. cloth.

*Stoney's Residence in Tasmania.*

Demy 8vo, with Plates, Cuts, and a Map, price 14s. cloth.

*The Court of Henry VIII.: being a Selection of the Despatches of SEBASTIAN GIUSTINIAN, Venetian Ambassador, 1515-1519.* Translated by RAWDON BROWN.

Two Vols., crown 8vo, price 21s. cloth.

## RECENT WORKS—continued.

*Forbes' (Sir John) Sight-seeing in Germany and the Tyrol.*

Post 8vo, with Map and View, price 10s. 6d. cloth.

*Undine.* From the German of "De la Motte Fouqué."

Price 1s. 6d.

*Conolly on the Treatment of the Insane.*

Demy 8vo, price 14s. cloth.

*Hopkins's Handbook of Average.*

8vo, price 12s. 6d. cloth.

*Morice's Hand-Book of British Maritime Law.*

8vo, price 5s., cloth.

*Adams's History and Topography of the Isle of Wight.*

Quarto, 25 Steel Plates, cloth, gilt edges, price 2l. 2s.

*Waring's Manual of Therapeutics.*

Fcap. 8vo, price 12s. 6d. cloth.

*Vogel on Disorders of the Blood.*

Translated by CHUNDER COOMAR DEY.

8vo, price 7s. 6d. cloth.

*Duncan's Campaign with the Turks in Asia.*

Two Vols., post 8vo, price 21s. cloth.

*Ross's Account of Red River Settlement.*

One Volume, post 8vo, price 10s. 6d. cloth.

*Ross's Fur Hunters of the Far West.*

Two Volumes, post 8vo. With Map and Plate. 21s. cloth.

*Russo-Turkish Campaigns of 1828-9.*

By COLONEL CHESNEY, R.A., D.C.L., F.R.S.

Third Edition. Post 8vo, with Maps, price 12s. cloth.

*Thomson's Military Forces and Institutions of Great Britain.* 8vo, price 15s. cloth.

*The Militiaman at Home and Abroad.*

With Two Etchings, by JOHN LEECH. Post 8vo, price 9s. cloth.

*Levi's Manual of the Mercantile Law of Great Britain and Ireland.* 8vo, price 12s. cloth.

*Thomson's Laws of War Affecting Commerce and Shipping.*

Second Edition, greatly enlarged. 8vo, price 4s. 6d. boards.

## WORKS ON INDIA AND THE EAST.

*Tracts on the Native Army of India.* By  
Brigadier-General JACOB, C.B.  
8vo, price 2s. 6d.

*Rifle Practice.* By Brigadier-General JACOB, C.B.  
Fourth Edition, 8vo, price 2s.

*Papers of the late Lord Metcalfe.* Selected and Edited  
by J. W. KAYE. Demy 8vo, price 16s. cloth.

*The Life of Mahomet and History of Islam to the  
Era of the Hegira.* By WILLIAM MUIR, Esq., Bengal  
Civil Service. Two Volumes 8vo, price 32s. cloth.

*The English in Western India; being the Early  
History of the Factory at Surat, of Bombay.* By PHILIP  
ANDERSON, A.M.  
Second Edition, 8vo, price 14s. cloth.

*Life in Ancient India.* By MRS. SPEIR.  
With Sixty Illustrations by G. SCHARF. 8vo, price 15s., elegantly bound in  
cloth, gilt edges.

*The Cauvery, Kistnah, and Godavery: being  
a Report on the Works constructed on those Rivers, for  
the Irrigation of Provinces in the Presidency of  
Madras.* By R. BAIRD SMITH, F.G.S., Lt.-Col. Bengal  
Engineers, &c., &c.  
In demy 8vo, with 19 Plans, price 28s. cloth.

*The Bhilsa Topes; or, Budhist Monuments of  
Central India.* By MAJOR CUNNINGHAM.  
One Volume, 8vo, with Thirty-three Plates, price 30s. cloth.

*The Chinese and their Rebellions.* By THOMAS  
TAYLOR MEADOWS.  
One Thick Volume, 8vo, with Maps, price 18s. cloth.

*On the Culture and Commerce of Cotton in  
India.* By Dr. FORBES ROYLE. 8vo, price 18s. cloth.

*The Fibrous Plants of India fitted for Cordage,  
Clothing, and Paper.* By Dr. FORBES ROYLE. 8vo,  
price 12s. cloth.

WORKS ON INDIA AND THE EAST.—*continued.*

*The Productive Resources of India.* By Dr. FORBES ROYLE. Super Royal 8vo, price 14s. cloth.

*Royle's Review of the Measures adopted in India for the Improved Culture of Cotton.* 8vo, 2s. 6d. cloth.

*A Sketch of Assam; with some Account of the Hill Tribes.* Coloured Plates, 8vo, price 14s. cloth.

*Butler's Travels and Adventures in Assam.* One Volume 8vo, with Plates, price 12s. cloth.

*Dr. Wilson on Infanticide in Western India.* Demy 8vo, price 12s.

*Crawford's Grammar and Dictionary of the Malay Language.* 2 vols. 8vo, price 36s. cloth.

*Roberts's Indian Exchange Tables.* 8vo. Second Edition, enlarged, price 10s. 6d. cloth.

*Waring on Abscess in the Liver.* 8vo, price 3s. 6d.

*Laurie's Second Burmese War—Rangoon.* Post 8vo, with Plates, price 10s. 6d. cloth.

*Laurie's Pegu.* Post 8vo, price 14s. cloth.

*Boyd's Turkish Interpreter: a Grammar of the Turkish Language.* 8vo, price 12s.

*Bridgnell's Indian Commercial Tables.* Royal 8vo, price 21s., half-bound.

*The Bombay Quarterly Review.* Nos. 1 to 9 at 5s. 10 to 13, price 6s. each.

*Baillie's Land Tax of India. According to the Mookummudan Law.* 8vo, price 6s. cloth.

*Baillie's Mookummudan Law of Sale.* 8vo, price 14s. cloth.

*Irving's Theory and Practice of Caste.* 8vo, price 5s. cloth.

*Addison's Traits and Stories of Anglo-Indian Life.*  
With Eight Illustrations, price 5s. cloth.

**NEW CHEAP SERIES OF POPULAR WORKS.**

In Small Post 8vo, with large Type, on good Paper, and neat cloth binding.

*Lectures on the English Humourists of the 18th Century.* By W. M. THACKERAY, Author of "Vanity Fair," "The Virginians," &c. Price 2s. 6d. cloth.

*British Rule in India.* By HARRIET MARTINEAU. Price 2s. 6d., cloth.

*The Political Economy of Art.* By JOHN RUSKIN, M.A. Price 2s. 6d. cloth.

TO BE FOLLOWED IMMEDIATELY BY

*The Town; its Memorable Characters and Events.* By LEIGH HUNT. With 45 Cuts.

AND OTHER STANDARD WORKS.

**CHEAP SERIES OF POPULAR FICTIONS.**

Well printed, in large type, on good paper, and strongly bound in cloth.

*Jane Eyre.* By CURRER BELL. Price 2s. 6d. cloth.

"Jane Eyre" is a remarkable production. Freshness and originality, truth and passion, singular facility in the description of natural scenery, and in the analysis of human thought, enable this tale to stand boldly out from the mass, and to assume its own place in the bright field of romantic literature.—*Times*.

*Shirley.* By CURRER BELL. Price 2s. 6d. cloth.

"The peculiar power which was so greatly admired in 'Jane Eyre' is not absent from this book. It possesses deep interest, and an irresistible grasp of reality. There are scenes which, for strength and delicacy of emotion, are not transcended in the range of English fiction."—*Examiner*.

*Villette.* By CURRER BELL. Price 2s. 6d. cloth.

"This novel amply sustains the fame of the author of 'Jane Eyre' and 'Shirley' as an original and powerful writer."—*Examiner*.

*Wuthering Heights and Agnes Grey.* By ELLIS and ACTON BELL. With Memoir by Currer Bell. Price 2s. 6d. cloth.

*A Lost Love.* By ASHFORD OWEN. Price 2s. cloth.

*Deerbrook.* By HARRIET MARTINEAU. Price 2s. 6d. cloth.

*Paul Ferroll.* Fourth Edition. Price 2s. cloth.

TO BE FOLLOWED BY

*School for Fathers.* By TALBOT GWYNNE. Price 2s. cloth. (Now Ready.)

*Tales of the Colonies.* By CHARLES ROWCROFT. Price 2s. 6d. cloth.

## NEW NOVELS.

(TO BE HAD AT ALL LIBRARIES).

- An Old Debt.* By FLORENCE DAWSON. 2 vols.
- Sylvan Holt's Daughter.* By HOLME LEE, Author of "Kathie Brande," &c. 3 vols.
- My Lady : a Tale of Modern Life.* 2 vols.  
 "There is force and a good deal of freshness in 'My Lady.'"—*Spectator.* | "It will be read with great interest and pleasure."—*Observer.*
- Eva Desmond ; or, Mutation.* 3 vols.  
 "A more beautiful creation than Eva it would be difficult to imagine. The novel is undoubtedly full of interest."—*Morning Post.* | "This interesting novel reminds us more of Mrs. Marsh than of any other writer of the day."—*Pres.*
- Maud Skillicorne's Penance.* By MARY C. JACKSON, Author of "The Story of My Wardship." 2 vols.
- The Cruellest Wrong of All.* By the Author of "Margaret ; or, Prejudice at Home." 1 vol.
- The Moors and the Fens.* By F. G. TRAFFORD. 3 vols.
- Gaston Bligh.* By L. S. LAVENU, Author of "Erlesmere." 2 vols.
- The Three Chances.* By the Author of "The Fair Carew." 3 vols.
- The White House by the Sea : a Love Story.* By M. BETHAM-EDWARDS. 2 vols.
- Riverston.* By GEORGIANA M. CRAIK. 3 vols.
- The Professor.* By CURRER BELL. 2 vols.
- The Noble Traytour. A Chronicle.* 3 vols.
- Farina.* By GEORGE MEREDITH. 1 vol.
- Below the Surface Life.* 3 vols.
- The Roua Pass.* By ERICK MACKENZIE. 3 vols.
- Kathie Brande.* By HOLME LEE. 2 vols.
- Friends of Bohemia ; or, Phases of London Life.* By E. M. WHITTY, Author of "The Governing Classes." 2 vols.
- Perversion ; or, The Causes and Consequences of Infidelity.* By the late Rev. W. J. CONYBEARE. 3 vols.



## NOVELS FORTHCOMING.

*Lost and Won.* By GEORGIANA M. CRAIK, Author of  
"Riverston." 1 vol.

*Old and Young.* 1 vol.

*A New Novel.* By the Author of "Amberhill."  
3 vols.

*A New Novel.* By the Author of "Tales for the  
Bush," &c. 3 vols.

*A New Novel.* By the Author of "The Heir of Vallis."

## NEW BOOKS FOR YOUNG READERS.

By the Author of "Round the Fire," &c.

*Old Gingerbread and the School-boys.*

With Four Coloured Plates. Price 3s. cloth.

*Unica: a Story for Sunday.*

With Four Cuts. Price 3s. cloth.

*Willie's Birthday; showing how a Little Boy  
did what he Liked, and how he Enjoyed it.*

With Four Illustrations. Price 2s. 6d., cloth

*Willie's Rest: a Sunday Story.*

With Four Illustrations. Price 2s. 6d. cloth.

"Graceful little tales, containing some pretty  
parables, and a good deal of simple feeling."—  
*Economist.*

"Extremely well written story books,  
amusing and moral, and got up in a very  
handsome style."—*Morning Herald.*

*Uncle Jack, the Fault Killer.*

With Four Illustrations. Price 3s. cloth.

"An excellent little book of moral improve-  
ment made pleasant to children; it is far be-  
yond the common-place moral tale in design  
and execution."—*Globe.*

*Round the Fire: Six Stories for Young Readers.*

Square 16mo, with Four Illustrations, price 3s. cloth.

"Charmingly written tales for the young."  
—*Leader.*

"Simple and very interesting."—*National  
Review.*

"Six delightful little stories."—*Guardian.*

"True children's stories."—*Athenæum.*

*The King of the Golden River; or, the Black  
Brothers.* By JOHN RUSKIN, M.A.

Third Edition, with 22 Illustrations by RICHARD DOYLE. Price 2s. 6d.

"This little fancy tale is by a master-hand. The story has a charming moral."—*Examiner.*

*Rhymes for Little Ones.*

With numerous Cuts. Price 1s. 6d. cloth.

## MISCELLANEOUS.

*Sir John Herschel's Astronomical Observations made at the Cape of Good Hope.* 4to, with plates, price 4l. 4s. cloth.

*Darwin's Geological Observations on Coral Reefs, Volcanic Islands, and on South America.* With maps, plates, and woodcuts, 10s. 6d. cloth.

*Levi's Commercial Law of the World.* Two Vols., royal 4to, price 6l. cloth.

*Playford's Hints for Investing Money.* Second Edition, post 8vo, price 2s. 6d. cloth.

*Sir John Forbes's Memorandums in Ireland.* Two Vols., post 8vo, price 1l. 1s. cloth.

*Leigh Hunt's Men, Women, and Books.* Two Vols.  
Price 10s. cloth.

————— *Table Talk.* 3s. 6d. cloth.

————— *Wit and Humour.* 5s. cloth.

————— *Jar of Honey.* 5s. cloth.

*Juvenile Delinquency.* By M. HILL and C. F. CORNWALLIS. Post 8vo, price 6s. cloth.

*Doubleday's True Law of Population.* Third Edition, 8vo, 10s. cloth.

*McCann's Argentine Provinces, &c.* Two Vols., post 8vo, with illustrations, price 24s. cloth.

*Goethe's Conversations with Eckermann.* Translated by JOHN OXENFORD. Two Vols., post 8vo, 10s. cloth.

*Kavanagh's Women of Christianity Exemplary for Piety and Charity.* Post 8vo, with Portraits, price 12s., in embossed cloth, gilt edges.

*Elementary Works on Social Economy.* Uniform in foolscap 8vo, half-bound.

I.—OUTLINES OF SOCIAL ECONOMY. 1s. 6d.

II.—PROGRESSIVE LESSONS IN SOCIAL SCIENCE.

III.—INTRODUCTION TO THE SOCIAL SCIENCES. 2s.

IV.—OUTLINES OF THE UNDERSTANDING. 2s.

V.—WHAT AM I? WHERE AM I? WHAT OUGHT I TO DO? &c. 1s. sewed.

*Swainson's Lectures on New Zealand.* Crown 8vo, price 2s. 6d. cloth.

*Swainson's Account of Auckland.* Post 8vo, with a View, price 6s. cloth.

## POETRY.

*Ionica.* Fcap. 8vo, 4s. cloth.

*Poems.* By HENRY CECIL. 5s. cloth.

*Poems.* By ADA TREVANION. 5s. cloth.

*The Six Legends of King Goldenstar.* By the late ANNA BRADSTREET. Fcap. 8vo, price 5s.

"The author evinces more than ordinary power, a vivid imagination, guided by a mind of lofty aim."—*Globe*.

*England in Time of War.* By SYDNEY DOBELL, Author of "Balder," "The Roman," &c. Crown 8vo, 5s. cloth.

"That Mr. Dobell is a poet, 'England in time of War' bears witness in many single lines, and in two or three short poems."—*Athenæum*.

*The Cruel Sister, AND OTHER POEMS.* Fcap. 8vo, 4s. cl.

"There are traces of power, and the versification displays freedom and skill."—*Guardian*.

*Poems of Past Years.* By Sir ARTHUR HALLAM ELTON, Bart., M.P. Fcap. 8vo, 3s. cloth.

"A refined, scholarly, and gentlemanly mind is apparent all through this volume."—*Leader*.

*Poems.* By Mrs. FRANK P. FELLOWS. Fcap. 8vo, 3s. cl.

"There is easy simplicity in the diction, and elegant naturalness in the thought."—*Spectator*.

*Poetry from Life.* By C. M. K. Fcap. 8vo, cl. gilt, 5s.

"Elegant verses. The author has a pleasing fancy and a refined mind."—*Economist*.

*Poems.* By WALTER R. CASSELS. Fcap. 8vo, 3s. 6d. cl.

"Mr. Cassels has deep poetical feeling, and gives promise of real excellence. His poems are written sometimes with a strength of expression by no means common."—*Guardian*.

*Garlands of Verse.* By THOMAS LEIGH. 5s. cloth.

"One of the best things in the 'Garlands of Verse' is an Ode to Toll. There, as elsewhere, there is excellent feeling."—*Examiner*.

*Balder.* By SYDNEY DOBELL. Crown 8vo, 7s. 6d. cloth.

"The writer has fine qualities; his level of thought is lofty, and his passion for the beautiful has the truth of instinct."—*Athenæum*.

*Poems.* By WILLIAM BELL SCOTT. Fcap. 8vo, 5s. cl.

"Mr. Scott has poetical feeling, keen observation, deep thought, and command of language."—*Spectator*.

*Poems.* By MARY MAYNARD. Fcap. 8vo, 4s. cloth.

"We have rarely met with a volume of poems displaying so large an amount of power, blended with so much delicacy of feeling and grace of expression."—*Church of England Quarterly*.

*Poems.* By CURRER, ELLIS, and ACTON BELL. 4s. cloth.

*Select Odes of Horace.* In English Lyrics. By J. T. BLACK. Fcap. 8vo, price 4s. cloth.

"Rendered into English Lyrics with a vigour and heartiness rarely, if ever, surpassed."—*Critic*.



